NATION

IMD puts 4 Kerala districts on red alert for heavy rain

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BUSINESS

Markets slide for 3rd day in a row; Sensex, Nifty fall 1%

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SPORTS

MI look to seal IPL playoffs spot against fallible DC

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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

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Trump allegedly threatened to abandon Israel

TEL AVIV, 20 MAY

The White House stressed on Monday that US President Donald Trump wants the war in Gaza to end amid reports that Washington was threatening to "abandon" Israel if it didn't follow suit. The Trump administration has warned that ongoing military operations could jeopardise American support. The UK announced the suspension of free trade negotiations and imposing new sanctions targeting West Bank settlements,. Meanwhile, the United Nations reports that 14,000 infants in Gaza are facing Imight dies in 48 hours due to lack of aid. *—PTI*

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Ranya Rao gets bail in gold smuggling case

BENGALURU, 20 MAY

Kannada actress Ranya Rao and co-accused Tarun Koduru Raju were granted default bail on Tuesday by the Special Court for Economic Offences in Bengaluru in gold smuggling case. However, Ranya Rao will continue to remain in custody under preventive detention invoked through the stringent Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Activities Act (COFEPOSA), 1974. The court, presided over by Judge Vishwanath C Gowdar, allowed the bail applications after the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence failed to file a chargesheet within 60 days of arrest. Both accused were required to execute a bond of Rs 2 lakh each.

—Salar News

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EAM thanks Dutch PM for firm stance against terrorism

THE HAGUE, 20 MAY

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar held discussions with Dutch Prime Minister Dick Schoof, expressing gratitude for the Netherlands' unwavering stance against terrorism. This marks Jaishankar's first foreign trip following a military confrontation between India and Pakistan prompted by the deadly Pahalgam attack. Jaishankar conveyed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's warm greetings, highlighting the commitment to elevate India-Netherlands relations in areas such as trade, technology, and security. Schoof reiterated support for India's fight against terrorism and noted the importance of collaboration in light of global dynamics.*—PTI*

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Astrophysicist Narlikar dies at 86

PUNE, 20 MAY

Renowned astrophysicist Dr. Jayant Vishnu Narlikar, known for the Hoyle–Narlikar theory of gravity, passed away in his sleep early on Tuesday at the age of 86. His last rites will be performed with full state honours, as announced by Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. Narlikar, in collaboration with Fred Hoyle, developed the Steady State theory as an alternative to the Big Bang theory, which suggests the universe is expanding and has a beginnin Born on 19 July, 1938, Narlikar completed his early education at Banaras Hindu University. He was pivotal in establishing the Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics.*—PTI*

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B'luru under water on Day 3 of rains

State sees 2 more deaths; City's poor infra under fire

BENGALURU, 20 MAY

Heavy rains continued to batter Bengaluru for the third consecutive day, crippling daily life and raising the rain-related death toll in the State to five. The City witnessed widespread waterlogging, traffic jams, and structural damage, with residents wading through knee-deep water in several areas.

In Sai Layout, floodwaters submerged ground floors of houses, cutting off access and leaving residents stranded. Around 150 people were rescued and relocated to safer areas on Monday. BBMP officials arranged emergency food and water supplies, though locals criticised civic agencies for slow response.

In Hennur, an orphanage was inundated, prompting a rescue operation by the Fire and Emergency Services and the Disaster Response Force. No injuries were reported, but residents described the situation as dire.

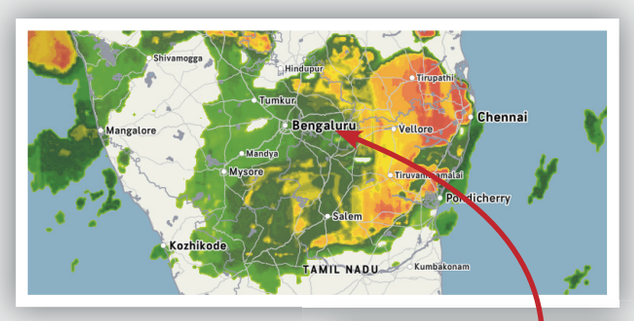
Major roads, including those near Manyata Tech Park and Silk Board Junction, were severely waterlogged, causing massive traffic snarls and stranding vehicles for hours. The city's roads, already in poor condition, saw the emergence of new potholes, further endangering motorists.

Tragically, two individuals, including a 12-year-old boy, died of electrocution while attempting to clear rainwater from a flooded basement. Additionally, two people in Raichur and Karwar lost their lives due to lightning strikes, officials confirmed.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) reported 30 mm of rainfall in Bengaluru over the last 24 hours, following 105 mm recorded overnight between Sunday and Monday. The IMD has issued an orange alert for the city, anticipating further downpours of 8–10 cm, and a yellow alert for several other districts including Bagalkot, Belagavi, Dharwad, and Vijayanagara.

IMD Bengaluru Director N Puviarasu explained that the City's poor drainage and heavy concretisation worsen the impact of even moderate rainfall. "This quantum of rain may be manageable in rural areas, but urban flooding in Bengaluru is a real concern," he said.

The IMD has urged citizens to stay indoors, avoid sheltering under trees, unplug electronics, and keep away from water bodies during lightning. Gusty winds and thunderstorms are expected in isolated areas of the affected districts over the next 24 hours. *—PTI*



7 Karnataka dists on red alert; City under orange

BENGALURU, 20 MAY

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Tuesday evening issued a red alert for seven districts in Karnataka, warning of extremely heavy rainfall, hailstorms, and strong surface winds. The alert covers Uttara Kannada, Udupi, Dakshina Kannada, Kodagu, Shivamogga, Chikkamagaluru, and Hassan. Flash flood warnings have also been issued, with the IMD cautioning of surface runoff and inundation in low-lying areas with saturated soils.

Despite persistent rainfall, Bengaluru remains under the orange alert category. The city recorded 0.4 mm of rainfall between 8:30 am and 2:30 pm on Tuesday. Weather experts noted that thunderstorms were moving towards northwest Bengaluru, indicating possible relief.

Meanwhile, the IMD also announced that the southwest monsoon is likely to reach Kerala in the next 4–5 days, earlier than the normal onset date of 1 June. If it arrives as predicted, it will be the earliest monsoon onset over mainland India since 2009. *—PTI*

>>>More on Pages 2 and 3

Workers clear rain-washed waste from Ulsoor Lake; traffic snarls choke Hosur Road during early morning showers; a massive tree uprooted in Chamarajpet as heavy rain lashes Bengaluru on Tuesday ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

SC demands stronger Waqf case, Sibal cries systematic capture

NEW DELHI, 20 MAY

Underscoring the "presumption of constitutionality in favour of law", the Supreme Court on Tuesday said petitioners challenging the waqf law needed a "strong and glaring" case for interim relief.

A bench comprising Chief Justice BR Gavai and Justice Augustine George Masih heard pleas challenging the validity of Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025 for passing interim orders on three issues.

The first issue is the power to denotify properties declared as waqf by courts, waqf-by-user or waqf by deed.

The second issue relates to the composition of state waqf boards and the Central Waqf Council, while the third relates to the provision stipulating a waqf property won't be treated as a waqf when an inquiry is conducted to ascertain if the property is government land.

Kapil Sibal ***PHOTO: PTI***

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for those challenging the provisions, said the amended law enables a systematic expropriation of waqf properties through executive means, bypassing due judicial process.

The 2025 Amendment (Section 3D) invalidates waqf declarations of protected monuments by infringing on the rights to equality and to practice and propagate religion.

Waqf by user did not historically require registration, but under the new law the mutawalli (custodian) can be jailed for being unable to answer satisfactorily about the properties.

He said the amended law diluted Muslim representation on the Central Waqf Council, allowing a majority of non-Muslim members.

The bench perused the provision, saying the law restricts non-Muslim appointments to two.

On the Centre's argument of a "1600 per cent increase" in waqf properties after the 2013 amendment, senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi said the rise was due to digitisation and listing processes, not new acquisitions. *—PTI*

SC says Flipkart known for creating monopolies

NEW DELHI, 20 MAY

The Supreme Court of India has raised alarms over e-commerce giant Flipkart's potential monopolistic practices and their impact on smaller competitors. A bench led by Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh appointed an amicus curiae to assist in resolving a dispute stemming from a National Company Law Appellate Tribunal order, which called for a probe by the Competition Commission of India (CCI) into alleged misuse of Flipkart's dominant position. The court expressed concern over the absence of the complainant, All India Online Vendors Association, suggesting that the organisation may have disbanded. Flipkart's counsel argued that it has enabled small vendors to expand businesses. *—PTI*

Sindoor not over, give back Hafiz Saeed: India

JERUSALEM, 20 MAY

Pakistan should hand over key terrorists Hafiz Saeed, Sajid Mir, and Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi to India, just like the US did with one of the masterminds of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack, Tahawwur Hussain Rana, India's Ambassador to Israel JP Singh has said.

Singh also called for the formation of an international coalition against terrorism.

Singh stressed that India's Operation Sindoor against Pakistan is "paused" and "not over".

Citing a long list of terror attacks in India that originated from Pakistan, Singh said that the "root cause is Jaish-e-Muhammad and Lashkar-e-Taiba".

The leaders of Lashkar-e-Taiba behind the Mumbai attack continue to roam free, he noted.

Pointing out to United States recently extraditing Rana, who was involved in the Mumbai attack, the diplomat said that Islamabad could also do the same with Hafeez Saeed, Lakhvi and Sajid Mir.

India's attack on Pakistan's Nur Khan base on 10 May created panic in the neighbouring country, with their director general of military operation reaching out to their Indian counterpart seeking a ceasefire.

Hafiz Saeed ***PHOTO: PTI***

> Pointing out to US recently extraditing Rana, who was involved in the Mumbai attack, the diplomat said that Islamabad could also do the same with Hafeez Saeed.

Goodwill and friendship governing the Indus Water Treaty were never honoured by Pakistan.

For the treaty to be operational, Pakistan must stop cross-border terrorism.

Singh dismissed Pakistan's offer to investigate the Pahalgam attack, describing it as a deflection strategy. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

SC RESTORES RULE

3 yrs' practice must for judicial aspirants

NEW DELHI, 20 MAY

The Supreme Court on Tuesday reinstated the requirement of a minimum three years' legal practice for candidates aspiring to join the judicial services. The decision, delivered by a bench comprising Chief Justice BR Gavai and Justices Augustine George Masih and K Vinod Chandran, emphasised the importance of courtroom experience in ensuring judicial competence.

The judgement, in response to a plea by the All India Judges Association, declared that fresh law graduates can no longer directly appear for entry-level civil judge (junior division) examinations. The Court noted that appointing inexperienced graduates had led to significant challenges, as highlighted in reports from multiple High Courts. To qualify under the new rule, candidates must provide certification of legal practice—either from a Principal Judicial Officer or an advocate with at least ten years' standing, duly endorsed. Experience as a law clerk will also count towards the three-year requirement. However, the ruling will not affect recruitment processes already initiated by High Courts prior to 20 May, 2025. All states and High Courts have been directed to amend their service rules accordingly.

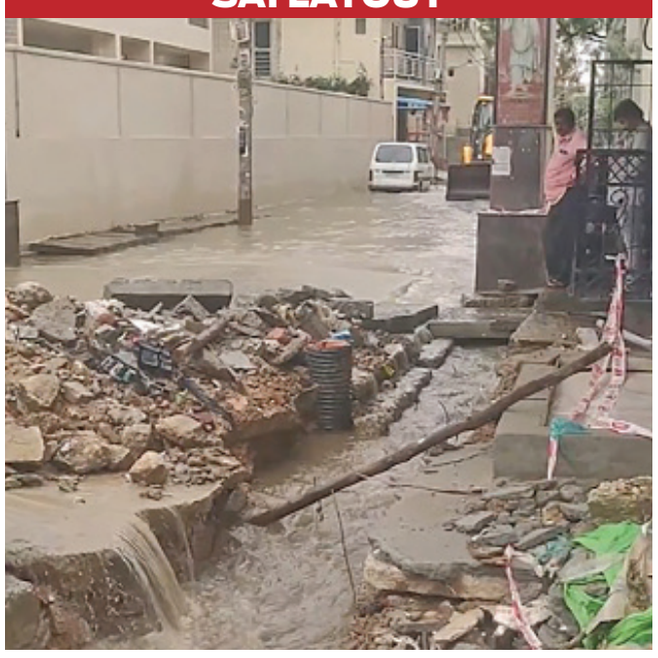
The Court observed that relying solely on academic knowledge and pre-service training fails to equip judicial officers with the necessary skills to handle complex legal matters involving liberty, property, and rights. The bench agreed with various High Courts that practical exposure is essential to develop sound judicial acumen. *—PTI*

Beating retreat ceremony to resume soon

AMRITSAR, 20 MAY

The Border Security Force (BSF) has said the public flag-lowering beating retreat ceremony at three locations in Punjab along the Pakistan frontier will begin on 21 May. The ceremony was open only for media persons on Tuesday. The public can participate in the event held at Attari, Hussainiwala and Sadki at 6pm from 21 May. However, BSF troops will not shake hands with Pakistan Rangers and the gates will remain closed. Public entry for this event was stopped on 8 May, citing "public safety".

SAI LAYOUT



SILK BOARD

THAT SINKING FEELING...

SAI LAYOUT

Residents struggle to step out as an open drain overflows in Sai Layout; (Below) BJP leaders inspect a stormwater drain near Silk Board Junction

BBMP workers clear rainwater from flooded roads at Sai Layout in Bengaluru on Tuesday *PHOTOS: MOHAMMED ASAD*

Public suffers as man-made floods wreck City

BENGALURU, 20 MAY

Relentless rain has left large parts of Bengaluru paralysed, flooding homes, crippling traffic, and triggering serious health concerns.

In KR Puram's Chelikere area, hundreds of homes were inundated, sparking public outrage. Residents blamed civic agencies, particularly the BBMP and BWSSB, for negligence. "BWSSB had dug up roads just before the rain. The debris blocked drains, and muddy water flooded our homes," said resident Praveen Kumar. "This is a man-made disaster," added Sampath, another resident. Despite efforts, stagnant water remains, and many families are stranded without drinking water or food.

Rain tragedy

In a tragic incident in BTM Layout 2nd Stage, a 12-year-old boy, Dinesh, and 55-year-old Manmohan Kamath were electrocuted while attempting to clear floodwater from their apartment basement. Police say Kamath was using an external motor pump when a short circuit occurred. The building's power supply has since been cut, and Unnatural Death Reports (UDRs) have been filed.

Neighbouring Bommanahalli also reported severe waterlogging, as did Rajarajeshwari Nagar, where residents waded through waist-deep water. In Jayanagar, fallen trees blocked roads and disrupted power supply.

The under-construction Central Silk Board metro station was also waterlogged, worsening traffic along Outer Ring Road and Hosur Road. Authorities temporarily restricted vehicle movement overnight to facilitate water clearance.

The Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre (KSNDMC) and IMD attribute the heavy rainfall to a low-pressure area over the Arabian Sea and a trough stretching across interior Karnataka.

Health hazards & wildlife intrusion

Floodwaters have become breeding grounds for infections in low-lying areas like BTM Layout, Silk Board, KR Puram, and Bommanahalli. Health officials warn of outbreaks, particularly in slum pockets. BBMP teams are distributing basic medicines and deploying doctors.

To make matters worse, snake sightings have spiked. Snakelets were found in homes in Chelikere and near Bilekahalli. BBMP has now stationed snake catchers in flood-prone areas.

"We're dealing with disease, power cuts, blocked roads, and now snakes," said Ravi, a resident of Bommanahalli. "This isn't just rain—it's an administrative collapse."

Residents continue to call for urgent and effective action as rainfall shows no signs of letting up.

DKS says govt not at fault

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said officials are on the field and attending to the issues caused by the downpour, and there is no need for anyone to worry.

Shivakumar, who is also minister in-charge of Bengaluru Development, asserted that the government is committed to protect the lives and properties of the people, as he hit back at the opposition's criticism of the administration's "failure" in managing the situation, by asking them whether they can stop nature? *—Salar News*

> **While people are dying and struggling to survive, Congress leaders are busy hosting Sampurna Samavesha (achievement convention). Bengaluru's citizens are living in a branded hell while its leaders are obsessed with publicity campaigns**
>
> -HD Kumaraswamy, Union Minister

A bus navigates through rainwater-logged roads at Silk Board Junction

BJP FLAYS CONG FOR CELEBRATING 2 YEARS IN OFFICE AMID FLOODS

BENGALURU, 20 MAY

BJP on Tuesday slammed Congress for organising 'Sadhana Samavesha' event to celebrate the party's two years in office, in Vijayanagara even as Bengaluru was reeling under severe flooding.

Leader of Opposition in the Assembly R Ashoka said, "There is a flood situation in Bengaluru and elsewhere in Karnataka. But the ruling Congress leaders, instead of handling the situation, have gone to Ballari to celebrate their two years in the government." He blamed the Congress government for the flood, saying it cancelled development works worth Rs 1,600 crore. Ashoka, along with BJP State President BY Vijayendra and other party leaders, visited the rain-affected areas near Silk Board Junction in Bengaluru on Tuesday (in pic). *—PTI*

Govt yet to name successor as police chief retires

BENGALURU, 20 MAY

A ceremonial farewell parade will be held in the city for Karnataka Director General and Inspector General of Police (DG&IGP) Alok Mohan, who is set to retire from service on Wednesday.

The parade will be held at 8am at the KSRP parade grounds in Koramangala, with Mohan receiving the guard of honour. The event will be conducted under the leadership of Deputy Commissioner of Police, West Division, S Girish.

The government has extended the tenure of Mohan, who took charge as DG&IGP after Praveen Sood was appointed Director of the CBI, till 21 May. Now, the government has to announce his successor.

Senior IPS officers Prashanth Kumar Thakur and Dr MA Saleem are said to be the frontrunners. Thakur, a 1992-batch officer with seniority over Saleem, also has political lineage as he is a relative of former

Karnataka Governor Rameshwar Thakur. Saleem, a 1993-batch officer and a native Kannadiga, reportedly enjoys the state government's favour.

Another potential contender, Dr K Ramachandra Rao, has been ruled out of the race after being sent on forced leave due to a controversy involving his daughter in a gold smuggling case.

If chosen, Saleem will be the first Kannadiga police chief since Shankar Bidari. *—Salar News*

Traffic chaos drives IT capital into a tizzy

BENGALURU, 20 MAY

Relentless rain on Tuesday paralysed traffic across Bengaluru, with waterlogged roads, stalled vehicles, potholes, and closed underpasses compounding commuter woes.

One of the worst-affected stretches was Hosur Road, where traffic between Silk Board and Rupena Agrahara was suspended due to severe flooding. The Elevated Expressway to Electronics City, a vital 9.9-km link for IT workers, was also shut during peak hours, stranding thousands. Police diverted vehicles to alternate routes, but congestion persisted.

Motorists in areas like Madivala, BTM Layout, Koramangala, Majestic, Rajajinagar, Queens Road, and Mekhri Circle struggled through knee-deep water. A moving car caught fire on Queens Road towards Balekundri Circle, triggering

Traffic jam on Silk Board Junction amid rain in Bengaluru on Tuesday *PHOTO: MOAHMMED ASAD*

further delays. Police quickly responded and doused the blaze, with initial reports pointing to a battery spark.

Heavy waterlogging was reported from Iblur Junction, Kasturinagar near Tin Factory, RMS 2nd Stage, and the Benniganahalli underpass, where traffic was suspended towards Tin Factory. KR Puram Police noted delays due to flooding near Grand Seasons Hotel on Ring Road.

In Mico Layout (BTM 2nd Stage), residents faced power outages since Monday evening, with complaints allegedly going unaddressed.

Other rain-hit areas included KR Market, Shantinagar, Banashankari, Jayanagar, Vijayanagar, Hebbal, and Peenya, where tree falls and road damage worsened conditions. Commuters reported severe delays from RV Dental College to Lalbagh, and from Silk Board Metro to HSR Layout.

The Bengaluru Traffic Police (BTP) advised residents to drive slowly, avoid waterlogged stretches, and ensure vehicle maintenance amid forecasts of more rainfall in the coming days. *—Salar News*

Bhu Guarantee is sixth promise to people: DyCM

HOSAPETE, 20 MAY

Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Monday announced the Bhu Guarantee as the sixth of the Congress government's guarantee schemes, calling it a way to repay the people's trust.

Speaking at the 'Samarpana' convention marking two years of the government, he reaffirmed that guarantee schemes will continue as long as the Congress is in power. "We are issuing khatas to people who lacked them for 50 years. I congratulate Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda for this historic move," he said. He also announced a seventh guarantee: digitisation of all urban khatas. He claimed the government had curbed corruption, cited Rs 5,000 crore for Kalyana Karnataka, and said industries have pledged Rs 10 lakh crore in investments. Shivakumar said the Congress has kept its word and will continue development, including lift irrigation projects and rural roads under the Kalyana Patha scheme. *—Salar News*

2 YRS OF CONG GOVT

'Unlike BJP, Cong helps the poor'

HOSAPETE, 20 MAY

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, on Tuesday said the BJP follows a model under which select rich people get entire money and resources, whereas in the Congress' model, money is put into the bank accounts and the pockets of the poor.

The Congress leader said his party's government in Karnataka has implemented the "sixth guarantee" promised to the people, by distributing over one lakh title deeds to the beneficiaries. He was speaking at an event to mark Karnataka Congress government's two years in office, during which over 1.11 lakh title deeds were distributed to eligible beneficiaries, whose "undocumented habitations" have been

DyCM DK Shivakumar, , Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, LoP Rahul Gandhi, CM Siddaramaiah in Hosapete on Tuesday *PHOTO: SALAR*

declared as revenue villages. "Congress party government has completed two years. During the election, we made you promises. We had promised five guarantees. The BJP people said we will not be able to fulfill it," Gandhi said.

> **Twenty-six people were murdered in Pahalgam because the Modi government did not provide security there**
>
> Mallikarjun Kharge, Congress President

RENUKASWAMY'S MURDER: DARSHAN APPEARS IN COURT

BENGALURU, 20 MAY

Actor Darshan Thoogudeepa and actress Pavithra Gowda appeared before the 57th City Civil and Sessions Court (CCCH) on Tuesday, along with other accused in the Renukaswamy murder case.

Accused No. 3, Pawan, was absent, while the court granted Nagaraju (Accused No. 11) permission to travel to Hospet for a separate case. Pavithra was also allowed to travel out of state for 15 days. Following a request from the defence for more time, the court adjourned the hearing to 10 July.

Darshan had previously drawn criticism for skipping a court hearing on 8 April citing back pain, only to appear at a film premiere the next evening. The court expressed displeasure over his absence.

All 17 accused, including Darshan and Pavithra, are currently out on conditional bail requiring court attendance. Renukaswamy, a resident of Chitradurga, was allegedly murdered on 9 June 2023. *—Salar News*

RANYA RAO GETS BAIL IN GOLD SMUGGLING CASE

BENGALURU, 20 MAY

Kannada actress Ranya Rao and co-accused Tarun Koduru Raju were granted default bail on Tuesday by the Special Court for Economic Offences in Bengaluru in gold smuggling case. However, Ranya Rao will continue to remain in custody under preventive detention invoked through the stringent Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Activities Act (COFEPOSA), 1974.

The court, presided over by Judge Vishwanath C Gowdar, allowed the bail applications after the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) failed to file a chargesheet within 60 days of arrest. Both accused were required to execute a bond of Rs 2 lakh each and furnish two sureties.

The bail conditions include a ban on leaving the country, cooperation with investigators, and a prohibition on engaging in similar offences. Despite the bail, Ranya remains in custody under COFEPOSA, which allows for detention without trial for up to a year based on suspicion of involvement in smuggling. Rao was arrested on 3 March at Kempegowda International Airport, . DRI officials, acting on a tip-off, seized 14.2 kg of gold worth over Rs 12.56 crore concealed in her luggage. *— Salar News*

AMID INQUIRIES

Cooperative Dept to seize assets of corrupt officers: Rajanna

MYSURU, 20 MAY

State Cooperation Minister KN Rajanna on Tuesday said the properties of cooperative department officials found guilty of financial irregularities will be seized. The move comes after departmental inquiries confirmed misuse of funds in various cooperative institutions.

Speaking in Mysuru, Rajanna said multiple complaints had been received against officials involved in misappropriation of funds in cooperative banks and house building societies across Mysuru and other districts. "Despite legal constraints in acting swiftly, we are working on suitable amendments to cooperative laws to enable property seizure and stricter penalties," he said.

On criticism of the government's flood management in Bengaluru, Rajanna defended the administration, highlighting the eviction of encroachments on stormwater drains and swift response measures. He added that Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, also the Bengaluru Development Minister, was effectively handling the situation. Addressing the delay in the Gruhalakshmi financial assistance scheme, Rajanna attributed it to software glitches but assured that the government would fulfil its promise. *—Salar News*

PHOTO: PTI

'U'khand madrasas to add Op Sindoor in curriculum'

DEHRADUN, 20 MAY

Uttarakhand Madrasa Education Board has announced plans to incorporate details of Operation Sindoor into curriculum of madrasas across the state. This initiative follows the recent military operation aimed at dismantling terrorist hideouts in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Board chairman Mufti Shamoon Qasmi stated the inclusion of Operation Sindoor is essential for educating students about its significance and necessity, particularly after a terrorist attack in Pahalgam that targeted unarmed civilians. Qasmi condemned Pakistan, labelling it a "nefarious country," and stressed the importance of teaching a lesson in response to such violence. He revealed that a committee will be convened shortly to facilitate the curriculum update. —*PTI*

PM Modi in talks with German Chancellor

NEW DELHI, 20 MAY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke with German Chancellor Friedrich Merz on Tuesday and exchanged views on regional and global developments, asserting the two countries stand united in the fight against terrorism. Earlier this month, Conservative leader Friedrich Merz succeeded in becoming Germany's next chancellor. "Spoke to Chancellor @_FriedrichMerz and congratulated him on assuming office. Reaffirmed our commitment to further strengthen the Strategic Partnership between India and Germany," Modi said in a post on X. "Exchanged views on regional and global developments. We stand united in the fight against terrorism," the Prime Minister said. —*PTI*

Delhi HC issues notice on Tharoor's defamation case

NEW DELHI, 20 MAY

Delhi High Court on Tuesday sought the stand of Shashi Tharoor on BJP leader Rajeev Chandrasekhar's plea challenging the dismissal of his defamation complaint against the Congress MP. Justice Ravinder Dudeja said the "matter required consideration" as he issued notice on Chandrasekhar's revision petition challenging the magisterial court's 4 February decision. Chandrasekhar alleged that Tharoor defamed him by making "false" and "derogatory" statements on national television, claiming the BJP leader "bribed" voters in the Thiruvananthapuram constituency during the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. —*PTI*

UDF flays Kerala LDF for celebrating 4th anniversary

KOCHI, 20 MAY

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and Left Democratic Front (LDF) government marked the fourth anniversary of their second term in office with a low-profile celebration at Cochin International Airport on 20 May. This event also commemorates Vijayan's nine-year tenure as Chief Minister, first in the state to lead for two consecutive terms. While LDF Ministers attended the cake-cutting, the opposition Congress-led United Democratic Front observed the day as a "Black Day," voicing disappointment over various governmental issues. In a Facebook post, Vijayan affirmed the government's achievements and its commitment to social welfare, highlighting progress in infrastructure, health, and education despite challenges. As government enters its fifth year, Vijayan expressed gratitude to citizens for their support and reiterated a commitment to fulfilling promises made in 2016. —*PTI*

Army denies deploying guns at Golden Temple

Temple said the administration asked them to just switch off the lights during blackout

AMRITSAR, 20 MAY

The Army Tuesday said no air defence guns or any other air defence resource were deployed within the Golden Temple premises during Operation Sindoor.

The assertion came in the wake of reports that the Golden Temple management had allowed the Army to deploy the air defence guns within the shrine to counter potential drone and missile threats from Pakistan.

Earlier, dismissing the reports, the additional head priest of the shrine and the apex religious body of Sikhs, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), said no permission was given to the Indian Army to deploy any air defence guns.

SGPC President Harjinder Singh Dhami also said that while the administration contacted them only about switching off the lights during the blackout after recent escalation of tension between India and Pakistan, they fully cooperated in the interest of administrative responsibility while maintaining the sanctity of the ongoing "maryada" (conduct). Dhami said there was no contact from any Army official regarding the installation of air defence guns at Sri Harmandar Sahib, Dhami said.

Additional head priest of the Golden Temple Giani Amarjeet Singh said it is not true that the Army was allowed to deploy air defence guns within the shrine to counter potential drone and missile threats from Pakistan. Singh said this claim was shockingly untrue and outrightly rejected it.

SGPC Chief pointed out that even during the blackout, large numbers of devotees continued to visit and do "sewa" (voluntary service) and had there been any such event like gun deployment, the Sangat (congregation) would certainly have noticed and seen it. —*PTI*

People arrive to offer prayers at Golden Temple on 'Gurgaddi Diwas' of sixth Guru of Sikhs Guru Hargobind, in Amritsar, Tuesday PHOTO: PTI

'Military infra at Leepa Valley decimated'

TANGDHAR , 20 MAY

Chinar Corps of Indian Army has completely destroyed military infrastructure at Leepa Valley in Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (PoK), officials said.

Indian Army officials estimate that it will take Pakistan 8-12 months to rebuild the infrastructure.

During a visit by PTI to the Line of Control (LoC) in Tangdhar, a forward village in Jammu and Kashmir's Kupwara district, the destruction of Pakistani military infrastructure, resulting from Indian Army's response to ceasefire violations in the second week of May during Operation Sindoor, was evident.

Another official said that the Pakistan Army employed heavy weaponry, including aerial platforms, to target Indian positions but failed to inflict any damage. The officials noted that several vacant military structures were present in Leepa Valley but the Indian Army targeted only those where maximum damage could be inflicted.

Based on information from sources, officials said at least 64 Pakistani military soldiers were killed and 96 injured. —*PTI*

MP Abhishek to represent TMC in all-party delegation

NEW DELHI, 20 MAY

Trinamool Congress (TMC) National General Secretary and Lok Sabha MP **Abhishek Banerjee** has been appointed to represent the party in multi-party delegations aimed at presenting India's stance in the wake of Operation Sindoor, the party announced on Tuesday.

The announcement follows a conversation between Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju and TMC leader and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, according to sources. "Smt Mamata Banerjee nominates Shri Abhishek Banerjee to represent us in the all-party delegation for India's global stand against terrorism. His voice will echo India's commitment to peace, justice, and global cooperation," the TMC stated in a post on X.

Originally, the Centre had selected Trinamool MP and former cricketer Yusuf Pathan as a member of one of the seven delegations, but he later withdrew his participation. Both Mamata and Abhishek Banerjee previously indicated that the Centre should not dictate the nominees from their party for the delegations.

A five-member delegation from TMC, including MPs Derek O'Brien, Sagarika Ghose, and Md Nadimul Haque, along with West Bengal Minister Manas Bhunia and former MP Mamata Thakur, will visit Jammu and Kashmir from 21 to 23 May.

The group's aim is to express solidarity with those affected by recent artillery shelling by the Pakistan Army, which resulted in deaths of 13 people, including four children. —*PTI*

Foreign Secretary Misri briefs all-party delegations

NEW DELHI, 20 MAY

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri on Tuesday briefed three of the seven all-party delegations ahead of their visits to different countries to put across India's stand following the Pahalgam terror attack and Operation Sindoor.

Members of the delegations headed by JD(U)'s Sanjay Jha, Shiv Sena's Shrikant Shinde and DMK's Kanimozhi attended the briefing in which they are expected to be told about their agenda and its finer details. —*PTI*

COLONEL SOFIYA QURESHI

SIT to probe MP minister's remarks

BHOPAL, 20 MAY

The Madhya Pradesh police have established a three-member Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe remarks made by state minister Vijay Shah concerning Colonel Sofiya Qureshi. The decision comes after the Supreme Court rejected Shah's apology for his comments, stating it lacked sincerity.

Shah's controversy erupted following his statements about Colonel Qureshi during a public event. His remarks were made in relation to Operation Sindoor, launched following a terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir that claimed the lives of 26 individuals, primarily tourists. Shah insinuated that Colonel Qureshi's role was contextually linked to the attack, stating, "They undressed Hindus and killed them...so a sister of your community will strip you naked." His statements drew significant backlash for their inflammatory nature.

Justice Surya Kant, during proceedings, questioned the authenticity of Shah's apology: "What kind of apology have you tendered? Sometimes people use docile language just to wriggle out of proceedings... What prevented you from making a sincere apology for your crass comments till now?"

SC mandated that SIT must include a woman officer and be led by an Inspector General from outside state, utilising Madhya Pradesh cadre officers.

Shah later expressed regret, asserting his respect for Colonel Qureshi, declaring he held her in higher regard than his own sister. However, implications of his comments, which could endanger religious harmony, remain a contentious issue. —*Agencies*

'NIA, IB grills H'yana YouTuber for spying'

CHANDIGARH, 20 MAY

The National Investigation Agency, Intelligence Bureau and military intelligence officials are questioning Haryana YouTuber Jyoti Malhotra, who was arrested recently on charges of spying for Pakistan, police said on Tuesday. A probe into the YouTuber's financial transactions and travel details is also underway, they said. A senior Haryana Police officer in Hisar said the central agencies and military intelligence officials are also probing her travel details, as she had reportedly visited Pakistan, China and some other countries. An attempt is being made to draw a complete chain of events to see which countries she visited and in what sequence, the officer said. A forensic analysis of Jyoti's laptop is underway, police said. —*PTI*

HC panel blames cops for Murshidabad riots

KOLKATA, 20 MAY

A report by a committee set up by the Calcutta High Court for identification and rehabilitation of victims of anti-Waqf protests-related violence in West Bengal's Murshidabad district said that the local police were "inactive and absent" during the incidents at Dhulian on April 11.

It also mentioned that a local councillor directed the attacks at Dhulian town in Murshidabad.

The report, submitted to the high court by the three-member committee, stated that a garments mall in Dhulian was also looted. The panel, comprising Joginder Singh, Registrar, (Law), National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Satya Arnab Ghosal, member secretary, West Bengal Legal Services Authority (WBLSA) and Saugata Chakraborty, Registrar, WBJS, submitted the report to the high court last week after visiting the affected areas. —*PTI*

Bhujbal inducted into M'rashtra cabinet

MUMBAI, 20 MAY

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis expanded his cabinet on Tuesday with the inclusion of Chhagan Bhujbal from the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP). This brings the total number of ministers in the state government to 39, comprising 19 from the BJP, 11 from Shiv Sena, and nine from NCP.

The ceremony took place at Raj Bhavan, where Governor CP Radhakrishnan administered the oath of office. The 77-year-old Bhujbal expressed his satisfaction with the appointment, stating he had no specific portfolio aspirations. His induction follows the resignation of Dhananjay Munde, who stepped down due to a criminal case involving a close aide. However, the appointment has sparked controversy, particularly from Maratha reservation activist Manoj Jarange, who expressed concern over promoting a leader opposed to the Maratha quota. —*PTI*

Newly sworn-in Maharashtra minister Chhagan Bhujbal being felicitated by NCP workers at the party office, in Mumbai on Tuesdat PHOTO: PTI

'2 MONTHS, NO ACTION'

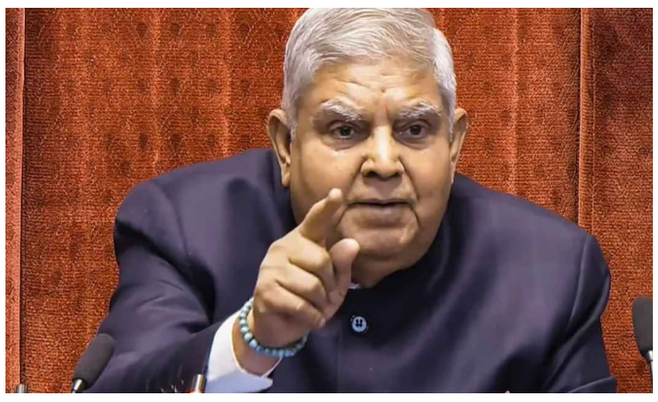
VP calls for FIR against Justice Verma

NEW DELHI, 20 MAY

Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Monday raised questions about the probe by a panel of three judges into the discovery of unaccounted cash at the official residence of Justice Yashwant Varma during a fire incident in March this year.

Dhankhar said it "does not have any constitutional premise or legal sanctity but most importantly it will be inconsequential", and wondered why no FIR has been registered regarding the matter so far.

He stressed on the need for an FIR as people are waiting to know the truth behind this matter, and who these bigger people that are involved in the case.



He stressed on the need for an FIR as people are waiting to know the truth behind this matter PHOTO: PTI

Speaking at a book launch event of The Constitution We Adopted, edited by senior advocate Vijay Hansaria, Dhankhar said "Already two months have gone by... investigation is required to be (done expeditiously). So is the case with the registration of an FIR."

Dhankhar also said the incident is troubling many people and requested for a thorough investigation using forensic and expert methods to uncover the whole truth.

On 22 March, the then Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna had created a three-member panel to look into the allegations against Justice Varma. The panel is believed to have found the claims as credible.

Justice Varma, who was later moved from the Delhi High Court to the Allahabad High Court, has denied the accusations. —*Agencies*

Communal politics cause of all problems: Kejriwal

NEW DELHI, 20 MAY

AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday alleged that communal politics practised by mainstream political parties over the last 75 years is the root cause of the country's problems.

Speaking at the launch of the AAP's student wing — the Association of Students for Alternative Politics (ASAP) — Kejriwal said parties like the BJP and Congress have historically focused on Hindu-Muslim politics instead of addressing core issues such as food, education and employment.

"Our country is grappling with a lot of problems. People do not have food or access to education. Why is this happening? It is because parties like the BJP, the Congress and others have only indulged in politics in the last 75 years," the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader said.

"These parties are only teaching our school children about Hindu-Muslim... This is the root cause of prob-lems in our country," he added.

The former Delhi chief minister also accused the BJP-led dispensation of working towards destroying the education system in the national capital, built by the AAP in its 10-year rule.

"Within three months, they (BJP) have started ruining the education system in Delhi. The AAP did not allow the private school mafia to increase fees in 10 years of its tenure," he said.

"Nowadays, there are three to four hour-long power cuts in Delhi, which did not happen earlier," he added. —*PTI*

Odisha's Bhadrak admin seeks GI tag for 'Palua Ladu'

BHADRAK, 20 MAY

The district administration in Bhadrak, Odisha, has commenced efforts to secure a Geographical Indication (GI) tag for 'Palua Ladu,' a traditional sweetmeat renowned for its unique flavour and artisanal preparation. Following a directive from District Collector Dilip Routray, local officials have been instructed to feature 'Palua Ladu' in hospitality packets during official events. Routray emphasised that obtaining a GI tag would preserve the cultural and historical significance of 'Palua Ladu,' providing Bhadrak with a distinct identity and enhancing the regional economy. The sweetmeat, celebrated for its rich taste, is made from traditional ingredients such as arrowroot powder, semolina and sugar. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Indian climber dies of injuries while scaling Mt Lhotse

KATHMANDU, 20 MAY

Tragedy has struck on Mount Lhotse, the fourth highest peak in the world, after the death of Indian climber Rakesh Bishnoi from Rajasthan. According to reports from The Himalayan Times, Bishnoi succumbed to injuries at the Yellow Band, a perilous section near Camp IV, following his summit on Monday. It is believed he had previously abandoned his attempt to scale Mount Everest just a day prior. The Nepalese climbing guides who assisted him confirmed that Bishnoi passed away during his descent. Efforts are currently underway to recover his body from the treacherous terrain. Standing at 8,516 metres, Lhotse is renowned for its challenging conditions. *—PTI*

Tripura urges traders to follow new port rules

AGARTALA, 20 MAY

The Tripura government has urged traders operating through integrated check posts in the state to comply with new port restrictions imposed by the Centre on the import of certain Bangladeshi goods, including ready-made garments and processed food items. Sailesh Kumar Yadav, director of the state's Industries and Commerce Department explained to exporters and importers from Agartala, Dharmanagar and Sonamura the importance of adhering to these guidelines. Goods transiting through India, but destined for Nepal and Bhutan are exempt from these restrictions. Concerns were expressed regarding the potential impact on Bangladeshi exporters, who rely heavily on land ports for their shipments. *—PTI*

Five people die as Tamil Nadu stone quarry caves in

SIVAGANGA, 20 MAY

A sudden rock collapse at a stone quarry in Mallakottai, near Singampunari, killed five people and injured two others. The victims, primarily quarry workers, were trapped under debris when the rocks fell unexpectedly. Emergency services worked swiftly to extricate three bodies from the rubble. Unfortunately, two additional victims succumbed to their injuries en route to a hospital. The two critically injured individuals have been admitted to a medical facility in Madurai for treatment. Authorities are currently investigating the incident to determine whether recent overnight rain or the use of explosives by the workers contributed to the collapse. The local community mourns the loss of life as investigations continue into the circumstances surrounding this tragic event. *—PTI*

IMD puts 4 Kerala districts on red alert for heavy rain

Weatherman predicts rainfall up to 204.4mm in 24 hours

KOZHIKODE, 20 MAY

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Tuesday issued a red alert for four districts in northern Kerala, including Wayanad, as heavy rains battered various parts of the region.

Widespread waterlogging has been reported in several urban centres, significantly affecting daily life and transportation in north Kerala.

While a red alert has been sounded for Kasaragod, Kannur, Wayanad, and Kozhikode districts, an orange alert has been issued for Palakkad, Malappuram, and Thrissur.

The IMD also issued a yellow alert for Idukki, Ernakulam, Kottayam, Alappuzha, and Pathanamthitta districtrs.

According to the Kerala State Disaster Management Authority (KSDMA), the districts where a red alert has been issued are likely to receive "extremely heavy rainfall," exceeding 204.4 mm within 24 hours.

Isolated areas in districts under orange alert are expected to receive "very heavy rainfall," between 115.6 mm and 204.4 mm in 24 hours.

Widespread waterlogging has been reported in several urban centres, significantly affecting daily life and transportation in north Kerala *PHOTO: X*

Extremely heavy rainfall within a short period may lead to flash floods and landslides. Waterlogging is also expected in urban and low-lying areas.

The chances of landslides and mudslides may increase in hilly regions.

Authorities have urged the public and government departments to exercise extreme caution.

People living in hilly areas at risk of landslides, mudslides, and flash floods, were urged to move to safer locations as early as possible.

Residents in areas prone to waterlogging should move to nearby relief camps or safer shelters if necessary.

The government has asked everyone to remain alert and follow official updates closely as the weather situation develops. *—PTI*

Heavy rain inundates Guwahati, normal life hit

GUWAHATI, 20 MAY

Heavy rains overnight inundated several areas in Guwahati, disrupting traffic on Tuesday. Many localities and major roads were inundated. Many schools also remained closed. Several vehicles were stuck on the waterlogged roads, with traffic jams being reported from across the city. Power supply was disrupted in many areas. Inclement weather was predicted over Assam for the next two to three days, with the state's western and southern witnessing more intense rainfall. The public has been advised to avoid unnecessary movement during heavy rainfall and report any sign of flooding or soil erosion. *—PTI*

Health Minister JP Nadda chairs a meeting of senior officials on country-wide 'TB Mukt Bharat Abhiyan' on Tuesday *PHOTO: PTI*

'Proud of India for beating trachoma'

NEW DELHI, 20 MAY

After India was conferred the certificate of elimination of trachoma as a public health problem at 78th World Health Assembly in Geneva, Union Health Minister JP Nadda called it is a proud moment for the nation.

In a post on X, JP Nadda said, "A proud moment for the nation…. India has been conferred the Certificate of Elimination of Trachoma as a Public Health Problem..."

Nadda said this milestone reflects the success of our public health initiatives under the visionary leadership Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The country remains firmly committed to disease elimination and ensuring health for all through sustained health reforms.

On 19 May World Health Organisation (WHO) director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus awarded India the Certificate of Elimination of Trachoma as a Public Health Problem at the 78th World Health Assembly in Geneva.

The Indian delegation is being led by Punya Salila Srivastava, secretary at the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

"Today marks the commencement of the 78th World Health Assembly in Geneva. The Indian delegation, led by Punya Salila Srivastava... is actively participating in the Assembly, reflecting India's continued commitment to strengthening global health systems and advancing international collaboration," the ministry said. *—ANI*

Teen girl gangraped in J'khand; five held

DUMKA, 20 MAY

Five people, including a minor, were arrested for allegedly raping a 16-year-old girl in Jharkhand's Dumka district on Monday evening and produced before a court on Tuesday, police said.

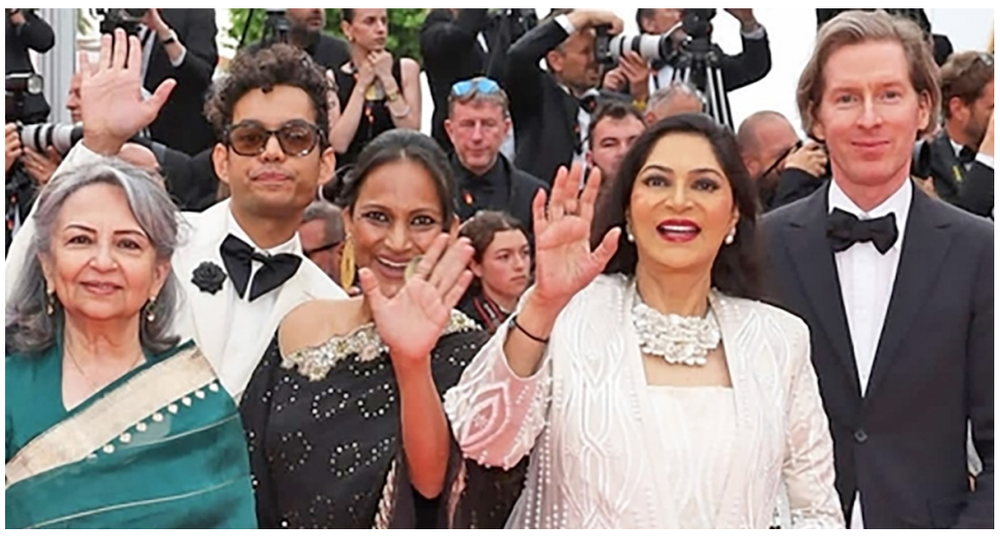
The incident occurred on 16 May. The girl lodged a complaint with the police on 17 May, claiming that she had gone to a relative's house for a marriage function, where a man forcibly took her to a deserted place and along with his four associates raped her.

Meanwhile, a 40-year-old Accredited Social Health Activist (Asha) worker was found dead in a corn field in Alapur area of UP's Budaun district on Monday night in a semi-nude condition.

Though police suspect sexual assault, officials said the exact cause of the death could be confirmed only after the autopsy. Senior Superintendent of Police Brijesh Singh said the deceased, identified as Rajkumari, wife of Raghvendra Jatav and resident of Hayatnagar village had gone to Kundan Nagla village for a vaccination drive on Monday.

A forensic team examined the scene and the body was sent for autopsy. *—PTI*

A PEEK INTO PAST



Simi Garewal, Sharmila Tagore and Wes Anderson attended the screening of Aranyer Din Ratri at Cannes Film Festival on Tuesday. Satyajit Ray's 1970 classic 'Aranyer Din Ratri' starring Garewal and Tagore was screened in a 4K restoration at the Cannes Classics section on Monday evening *PHOTO: X/@SOURAV_3294*

RAJ COPS ARREST 'LOOT-AND-SCOOT BRIDE' FROM MP

BENGALURU, 20 MAY

Rajasthan Police have brought to book a 23-year-old woman for allegedly marrying 25 men in different states within a period of seven months.

Police identified the woman, who earned the nickname "loot-and-scoot bride" for her repeated scams, as Anuradha Paswan. She was arrested from Bhopal by the Sawai Madhopur police of Rajasthan.

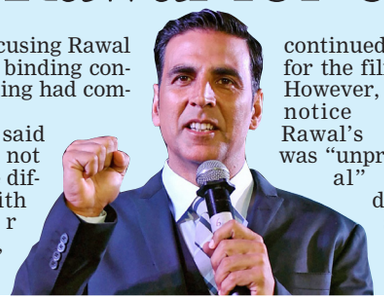
Sources said Anuradha was part of a well-organised marriage fraud network. She would pose as the bride and marry unsuspecting men and vanish within days, stealing valuables such as gold, cash and electronic gadgets.

The fraud was exposed when a victim filed a complaint on 3 May. He had paid Rs 2 lakh to marriage brokers Sunita and Pappu Meena to find him a bride. Anuradha married him on 20 April in a local registrar's office and scooted on 2 May with valuables from his home. Police said the gang platforms like WhatsApp to present potential brides, charging clients between Rs 2 lakh to Rs 5 lakh. *—PTI*

Akshay sues Rawal for exiting 'Hera Pheri 3'

BENGALURU, 20 MAY

Akshay Kumar has reportedly filed a Rs 24 lakh lawsuit against veteran actor Paresh Rawal following his abrupt departure from Hera Pheri 3. According to reports, Akshay, who is also producing the film through Cape of Good Films, has issued a legal notice accusing Rawal of breaching a binding contract after filming had commenced.



Rawal had said his exit was not due to creative differences with director Priyadarshan, expressing continued respect for the filmmaker. However, the legal notice claims Rawal's conduct was "unprofessional" and demonstrated "blatant disregard for professional integrity and commercial morality." It adds that Rawal had accepted a significantly higher fee—reportedly three times his usual rate—and a signing amount, before quitting unexpectedly.

Director Priyadarshan has voiced disappointment over the situation, stating he received no explanation from Rawal despite their long-standing collaboration. He defended Akshay's legal move, calling it understandable given the financial implications.

This is reportedly the first time Akshay Kumar has pursued legal action against a fellow actor. *—Salar News*

Mumbai HC denies relief to L&T

MUMBAI, 20 MAY

PHOTO: PTI

The Bombay High Court has denied construction giant Larsen & Toubro (L&T) any relief regarding the ongoing dispute over the Thane-Ghodbunder to Bhayandar tunnel and elevated road projects, thus permitting the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) to proceed with opening the tender bids as planned.

A vacation bench comprising Justices Kamal Khata and Arif Doctor confirmed that it would not extend the interim stay issued last week, which had prevented the MMRDA from opening the financial bids, the final step in the tendering process. The financial bids were due to be opened on 13 May.

Earlier this month, L&T filed two petitions challenging the lack of communication regarding the status of its bid for the Rs 6,000 crore project, which features a 9.8-km elevated road above Vasai Creek, the second longest in India after the Atal Setu.

While the technical bids were opened on 1 January, 2025, L&T contended that it had received no subsequent communication. However, MMRDA counsel argued that only responsive bidders are notified. Following the tender's opening, L&T's financial bids will be kept sealed for one week. *—PTI*

ASSIGN PROTECTION OFFICERS FOR WOMEN'S SAFETY: SC

NEW DELHI, 20 MAY

The Supreme Court on Tuesday directed all the states and union territories to identify officers in the Department of Women and Child Development at the district and taluka levels and designate them as protection officers.

A bench of Justices BV Nagarathna and Satish Chandra Sharma directed the chief secretaries of the states and union territories and Women and Child/ Social Welfare Departments' secretaries to ensure the designation of officers as protection officers under the Domestic Violence Act.

They will also promote awareness about the provisions of the Act through media, ensure effective coordination of services and implement the provisions.

The bench ordered the member secretary of National Legal Services Authority to instruct all member secretaries of the state legal services authorities to spread awareness among women about their right to free legal aid and advice.

The top court's direction came on a plea filed by NGO, We the Women of India seeking to fill massive gaps in infrastructure under the act across the country for providing effective legal aid to women survivors of abuse at matrimonial homes and creating shelter homes for them post lodging of complaints against husbands and in-laws. *—PTI*

VETERAN IN COSMOLOGY

Astrophysicist Jayant Narlikar dies at 86

PUNE, 20 MAY

Eminent astrophysicist, science communicator and Padma Vibhushan awardee Jayant Vishnu Narlikarhas passed away at the age of 86 in Pune on Tuesday.

Narlikar was widely known for his pioneering contributions to cosmology, efforts to popularise science and setting up premier research institutions in the country.

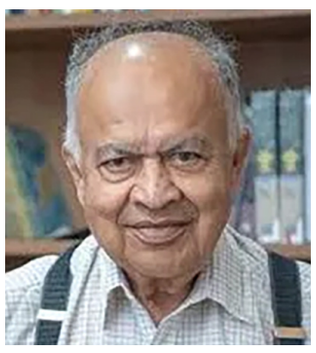
Narlikar died in his sleep early Tuesday morning. His last rites will be conducted on 21 May with full state honours.

Narlikar had recently undergone a hip surgery in a city-based hospital. He is survived by three daughters.

Born on July 19, 1938, Narlikar completed his early education at the Banaras Hindu University. He went to Cambridge for higher studies, becoming a Wrangler and Tyson Medalist in the Mathematical Tripos.

He joined the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, where under his charge the Theoretical Astrophysics Group expanded and acquired international standing.

As a director he led the Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics as a global centre for excellence in teaching and research in astronomy and astrophysics. The Third World Academy of Sciences honoured Narlikar in 2012.



Jayant Vishnu Narlikarhas *PHOTO: ANI*

He was honoured with the Kalinga Award in 1996 and Padma Bhushan in 1965 at the young age of 26.

He was awarded Padma Vibhushan and Maharashtra Bhushan in 2004 and 2011 respectively.

In 2014, the Sahitya Akademi selected his autobiography for its highest prize in regional language (Marathi) writing.

Former Indian Space Research Organization chairman S Somanath said the country has lost a visionary astrophysicist and science communicator.

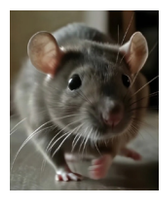
Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh called Narlikar "one of the world's greatest astrophysicists".

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said that the country had lost a great scientist and an equally great writer. *—PTI*

Rat bite horror grips Patna's NMCH hospital

PATNA, 20 MAY

A fresh controversy has engulfed Bihar's state-run Nalanda Medical College and Hospital (NMCH) after a specially abled patient claimed that rats bit the toes on his right foot while he was asleep.



The incident occurred on Saturday night in the Orthopaedics ward. It came to light after the patient's family alerted hospital staff on Sunday morning.

Awadesh Kumar, the patient, told reporters he awoke to find his toes bleeding. "Rats have been creating havoc here," he said. His relatives informed nurses and other medical personnel. Dr Om Prakash, Head of the Orthopaedics Department, confirmed the matter had been brought to the notice of the medical superintendent.

Reacting on X, Opposition leader Tejashwi Yadav said: "In Patna's NMCH, rats have bitten the toes of a specially abled patient. Previously, rats gnawed the eye of a deceased man here… yet no action was taken."

In a previous incident at NMCH in November 2024, a man's eye was found missing post-mortem, with rats again blamed. Two nurses were suspended for negligence. *—PTI*

HAKA PROTEST

Protesters perform a Haka outside the Parliament in Wellington,New Zealand, on Tuesday. The protest arose after three legislators performed the Haka in New Zealand's Parliament, in November, 2024. Haka commonly known as war dance, is performed by the Maori people, and displays the tribes' pride, unity and strength. The dance includes violent foot-stamping, tongue protrusions and rhythmic body slapping accompanied by loud chants
PHOTO: - PTI

76% of India's population at high heat risk: Study

According to the study, the number of hot days are increasing in India, but concerningly, the number of warm nights are increasing even more, creating health risks for the population ***PHOTO: PTI***

About 57 per cent of Indian districts, home to 76 per cent of India's total population, are currently at 'high' to 'very high' heat risk, according to a new study.

According to the study published on Tuesday by Delhi-based climate and energy think-tank Council on Energy Environment and Water (CEEW), the 10 states and union territories with the highest heat risk include Delhi, Maharashtra, Goa, Kerala, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.

It also found that the number of very warm nights has increased faster than that of very hot days in the last decade.

Very warm nights and very hot days are defined as periods when minimum and maximum temperatures rise above the 95th percentile threshold, i.e., what was normal for 95 per cent of the time in the past.

As part of the study, CEEW researchers developed a Heat Risk Index (HRI) for 734 districts, using 40 years of climate data (1982-2022) and satellite images to study heat trends, land use, water bodies and green cover.

They also included data on population, buildings, health and socio-economic factors, along with night temperatures and humidity, for a comprehensive picture of heat risk.

According to the study, the number of very hot days is increasing in India, but concerningly, the number of very warm nights is increasing even more, creating health risks.

High night temperatures are considered dangerous because the body does not get a chance to cool down.

Increasing nighttime temperature is more common in cities because of the urban heat island effect, in which the metro areas are significantly hotter than their surroundings.

The study revealed that even in the traditionally cooler Himalayan regions, where heat thresholds are lower than in the plains and coasts, both very hot days and very warm nights have increased.

This could severely impact the fragile mountain ecosystems.

For example, in the union territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, the number of very hot days and very warm nights rose by over 15 days and nights each summer.

The study also showed that north India's summer humidity climbed from 30-40 per cent to 40-50 per cent in the last decade, worsening heat stress, especially in the Indo-Gangetic plain where farm workers toil outdoors.

Also, early mornings now feel hotter due to humid conditions. Cities like Delhi, Chandigarh, Jaipur and Lucknow have seen a 6 to 9 per cent rise.

CEEW researchers said cities like Mumbai, Delhi and much of the Indo-Gangetic plain face the highest exposure as high population density, dense buildings and existing socio-economic and health issues worsen heat risks.

Built-up areas grew rapidly between 2005 and 2023, especially in Tier-II and Tier-III cities, trapping heat.

Districts in Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and others face greater vulnerability due to high temperatures and health factors.

In contrast, districts in Odisha with more green cover and water bodies are better able to cope, they said.

Extreme heat broke all records in 2024, the hottest year on record in India and globally. This year, the country recorded its first heatwave on February 27-28, much earlier than April 5 last year.

Severe and frequent heatwaves are further burdening low-income households in the country, which often have poor access to water and cooling, and testing the endurance of outdoor workers toiling in the searing sun, forcing them to take frequent breaks.

Studies show India could lose the equivalent of 35 million full-time jobs and experience a 4.5 per cent reduction in GDP by 2030.

Experts say outdoor workers, pregnant women, the elderly, children and people with chronic health conditions are at higher risk of heat exhaustion and heatstroke.

According to the World Health Organization, more than 1,66,000 people died as a result of heatwaves between 1998 and 2017.

In one of its fiercest heatwave spells since 2010, India logged over 48,000 heatstroke cases and 159 heat-related deaths last year.

Experts say India is likely undercounting heat-related deaths. *– PTI*

SALAR سالار

Syria's driest winter causes water crisis in Damascus

Inside a mountain above the Syrian capital, Hassan Bashi walked through tunnels that used to be filled with water from a spring famous for its pure waters.

The spring rises inside the ruins of a Roman temple in the Barada Valley and flows toward Damascus, which it has been supplying with drinking water for thousands of years. Normally, during the winter flood season, water fills all the tunnels and washes over much of the temple.

Now, there is only a trickle of water following the driest winter in decades.

Bashi, who is a guard but also knows how to operate the pumping and water filtration machines in the absence of the engineer in charge, displayed an old video on his cell phone of high waters inside the ruins.

"I have been working at the Ein al-Fijeh spring for 33 years and this is the first year it is that dry," Bashi said.

The spring is the main source of water for 5 million people, supplying Damascus and its suburbs with 70 per cent of their water.

As the city suffers its worst water shortages in years, many people now rely on buying water from private tanker trucks that fill from wells.

Government officials are warning that the situation could get worse in the summer and are urging residents to use water sparingly while showering, cleaning or washing dishes.

"The Ein al-Fijeh spring is working now at its lowest level," said Ahmad Darwish, head of the Damascus City Water Supply Authority, adding that the current year witnessed the lowest rainfall since 1956.

The channels that have been there since the day of the Romans two millennia ago were improved in 1920 and then again in 1980, he said.

Darwish said the spring-water water comes mainly from rainfall and melted snow off the mountains along the border with Lebanon, but because of this year's below-average rainfall, "it has given us amounts that are much less than normal."

There are 1.1 million homes that get water from the spring, and in order to get through the year, people will have to cut down their consumption, he said.

The spring also feeds the Barada River that cuts through the capital. It is mostly dry this year.

In Damascus's eastern area of Abbasids, Bassam Jbara is feeling the shortage. His neighbourhood only gets water for about 90 minutes a day, compared with previous years when water was always running when they turned on the taps.

Persistent electricity cuts are making the problem worse, he said, as they sometimes have water but no power to pump it to the tankers on the roof of the building. Jbara once had to buy five barrels of undrinkable water from a tanker truck that cost him and his neighbours USD 15, a large amount of money in a country where many people make less than USD 100 a month.

"From what we are seeing, we are heading toward difficult conditions regarding water," he said, fearing that supplies will drop to once or twice a week over the summer. He is already economising.

"The people of Damascus are used to having water every day and to drinking tap water coming from the Ein al-Fijeh spring, but unfortunately the spring is now weak," Jbara said.

During Syria's 14-year conflict, Ein al-Fijeh was subjected to shelling on several occasions, changing between forces of then-President Bashar Assad and insurgents over the years.

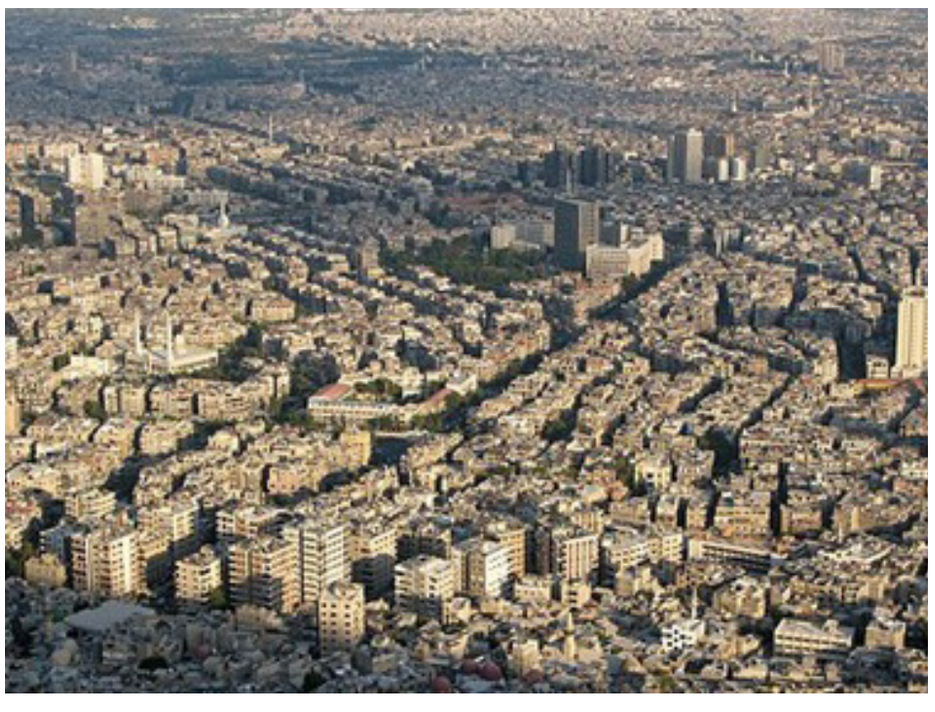
In early 2017, government forces captured the area from insurgents and held it until December when the five-decade Assad dynasty collapsed in a stunning offensive by fighters led by the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham group, or HTS, of current President Ahmad al-Sharaa.

Tarek Abdul-Wahed returned to his home near the spring in December nearly eight years after he was forced to leave with his family and is now working on rebuilding the restaurant he owned. It was blown up by Assad's forces after he left the area.

Abdul-Wahed looked at the dry area that used to be filled with tourists and Syrians who would come in the summer to enjoy the cool weather.

"The Ein al-Fijeh spring is the only artery to Damascus," Abdul-Wahed said as reconstruction work was ongoing in the restaurant that helped 15 families living nearby make a living in addition to the employees who came from other parts of Syria.

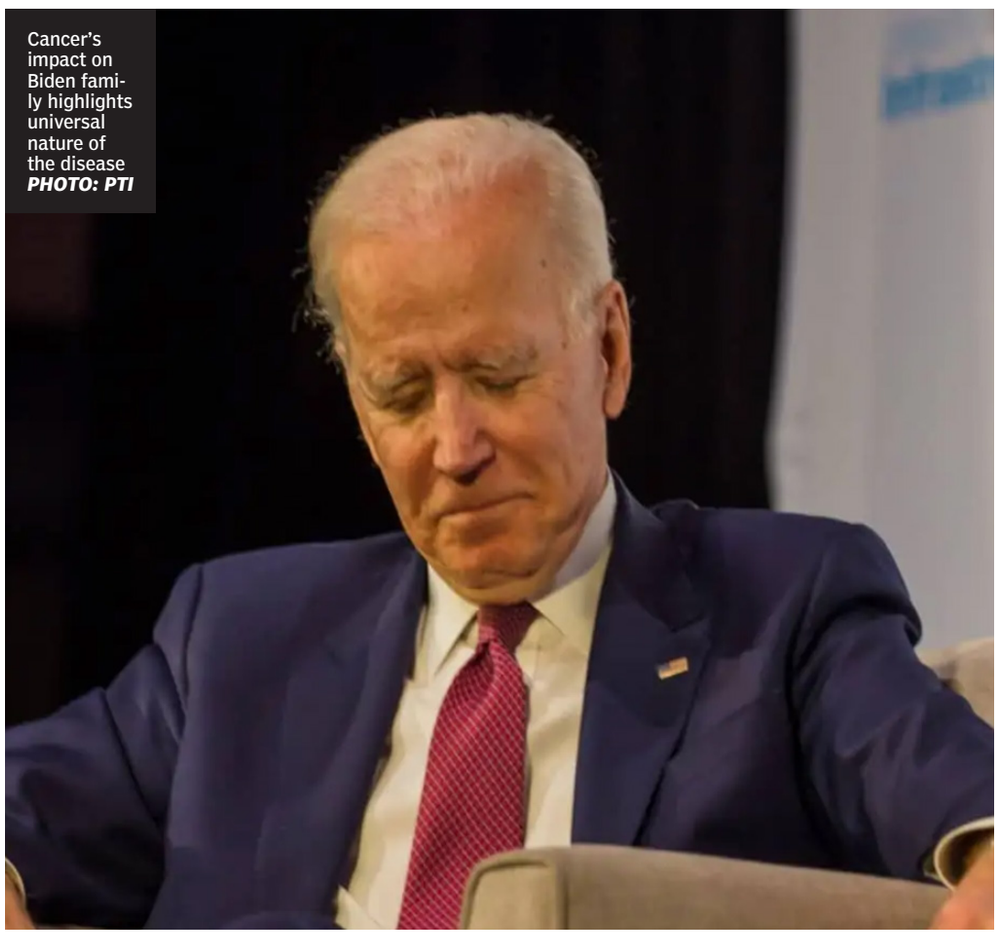
"Now it looks like a desert. There is no one," he said. "We hope that the good old days return with people coming here." *– PTI*



Damascus faces worst water shortages; millions rely on private tanker trucks ***PHOTO: PTI***

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Political career shadowed by cancer, Biden faces grim diagnosis



Cancer's impact on Biden family highlights universal nature of the disease ***PHOTO: PTI***

In Joe Biden's family, there's a saying that the three worst words anyone can hear are "you have cancer."

One decade ago, his son Beau died from a brain tumour. Several years later, his wife Jill had two cancerous lesions removed in her own brush with the disease.

Now it is the former president's turn. Biden's office disclosed his prostate cancer diagnosis over the weekend, saying it has already spread to his bones.

Although the cancer can possibly be controlled with treatment, it is no longer curable. The announcement is a bitter revelation that a disease that has brought so much tragedy to Biden's life could be what ends it.

"Cancer touches us all," Biden wrote on social media. "Like so many of you, Jill and I have learned that we are strongest in the broken places."

Even before the diagnosis, Biden's post-presidency was shadowed by questions about his health and whether he should have run for reelection.

As questions about his fitness for office mounted, he abandoned the campaign and Donald Trump retook the presidency by defeating Kamala Harris. As the 82-year-old Biden works to safeguard his damaged political legacy, he'll also be fighting a disease that shaped the final chapters of his decades-long career.

Biden was serving as Barack Obama's vice president when Beau died in 2015. He decided not to seek the Democratic nomination the following year, which helped clear a path for Hillary Clinton, who lost to Trump in 2016.

Valerie Jarrett, a longtime Obama adviser, said Biden wanted to "channel his grief into action and figure out how we can do better" on treating cancer to "make sure that other people didn't have to go through what he went through."

The effort was formalised as a White House task force, with Biden in charge. After a few years out of office, Biden re-entered politics to campaign against Trump in 2020. .

"Beau should be the one running for president, not me," Biden said, a thought he echoed on many occasions.

He made fighting cancer a focus for his presidency, resurrecting a "moonshot" initiative to increase funding for research and improve treatment. He unveiled the initiative at the John F Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum in 2022, echoing the Democratic icon's famous speech declaring that "we will go to the moon" six decades earlier.

"Beating cancer is something we can do together," Biden said.

By this point, he had already signed legislation known as the PACT Act to expand healthcare benefits for veterans. The law guarantees treatment for chronic illnesses blamed on burn pits, which were used to dispose.

Biden left no doubt that he believed Beau's death resulted from his service with the National Guard in Iraq.

"When they came home, many of the fittest and best warriors that we sent to war were not the same — headaches, numbness, dizziness, cancer," he said. "My son Beau was one of them."

Denis McDonough, who led the Veterans Affairs Department under Biden, said the president didn't talk about Beau's death during policy discussions. But he said it was clear that Biden "knew the experience that other families were having, and he was going to be damn sure that we weren't going to miss an opportunity to address that."

McDonough recalled that Biden wanted the new law to take effect as quickly as possible.

"He had an option to stretch it out," he said. "He said no way."

The following year, first lady Jill Biden had two cancerous lesions removed, one above her right eye and the other on her chest. They were both basal cell carcinoma.

Learning of the diagnosis "was a little harder than I thought," she told The Associated Press during a trip to Africa. "I'm lucky," she said. "Believe me, I am so lucky that they caught it, they removed it, and I'm healthy."

Biden's cancer diagnosis is not the first time that he's faced his own mortality.

Months after ending his first presidential campaign in 1988, he collapsed in a New York hotel room. In his memoir "Promises to Keep," he described "lightning flashing inside my head, a powerful electrical surge — and then a rip of pain like I'd never felt before."

He had suffered a brain aneurysm that required surgery. Biden wrote that "I had no real fear of dying. I'd long since accepted the fact that life's guarantees don't include a fair shake."

McDonough imagined that Biden would feel similarly about his current situation.

"He's always on to the next fight," he said. *—PTI*

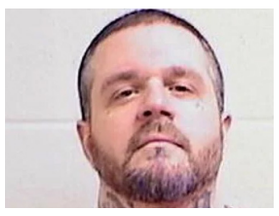


PHOTO: X

Indiana's 2nd in 15 yrs: Man executed for killing cop

MICHIGAN CITY, 20 MAY

Indiana executed Benjamin Ritchie, 45, early on Tuesday for the killing of Beech Grove Police Officer Bill Toney in 2000. It was the state's second execution in 15 years. Ritchie was pronounced dead at 12.46 am after lethal injection at Indiana State Prison. He was 20 and on probation when he fatally shot Toney during a foot chase after stealing a van. Ritchie apologised to the parole board this month, expressing remorse for the killing. His lawyers argued he had fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, childhood lead exposure, and bipolar disorder. Governor Mike Braun denied clemency, citing prison misconduct. Media access to executions remains barred in Indiana, now facing a lawsuit by the Associated Press and others. Indiana resumed executions in December after a hiatus due to lethal injection drug shortages. Ritchie's case was one of 12 scheduled executions across eight states this year. *—PTI*

Russia, Ukraine to begin ceasefire talks: Trump

US Prez urges Putin, Zelenskyy to spur move to end war

WASHINGTON, MAY 20

Ukrainian, US and Russian presidents Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin *PHOTO: PTI*

- It was not clear when or where talks might take place or who would participate. Trump's announcement came days after the first direct engagement between Russian and Ukrainian delegations since 2022

Russia and Ukraine will "immediately" begin ceasefire negotiations, President Donald Trump said Monday after separate calls with the leaders of both countries meant to spur progress toward ending the three-year war. The conversations did not appear to yield a major breakthrough.

It was not clear when or where any talks might take place or who would participate. Trump's announcement came days after the first direct engagement between Russian and Ukrainian delegations since 2022. Those negotiations on Friday in Turkey brought about a limited exchange of prisoners but no pause in the fighting.

Ahead of the calls, the White House said Trump had grown "frustrated" with both leaders over the continuing war. Vice President JD Vance said Trump would press Russian President Vladimir Putin to see if he was truly interested in stopping the fighting, and if not, that the U.S could disengage from trying to stop the conflict. Trump later told reporters that he believed Putin was serious about wanting peace.

"The conditions for that will be negotiated between the two parties, as it can only be, because they know details of a negotiation that nobody else would be aware of," Trump said in a social media post.

Trump said the call with Putin was "excellent." Trump has struggled to end the war, a setback for his promises to quickly settle the conflict. "He's grown weary and frustrated with both sides of the conflict," White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt told reporters Monday before the calls. "He has made it clear to both sides that he wants to see a peaceful resolution and ceasefire as soon as possible."

After the call, Putin said Russia was ready to continue discussing an end to the fighting after a "very informative and very frank" conversation with Trump. Putin said the warring countries should "find compromises that would suit all parties."

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Monday that he reaffirmed to Trump that Ukraine is ready for a full and unconditional ceasefire. *—PTI*

CANADA, FRANCE VOW ACTION

Israeli soldiers move around in tanks near the border with the Gaza Strip in southern Israel on Sunday *PHOTO: PTI*

Israeli strikes on Gaza kill 73 people

DEIR AL-BALAH, 20 MAY

Israeli strikes pounded Gaza overnight and into Tuesday, killing 73 people, including 22 at a displacement shelter in Gaza City, Palestinian health officials said, as Israel pressed its war against Hamas despite mounting international condemnation.

Israel launched another major offensive in the territory in recent days, saying it aims to return dozens of hostages held by Hamas and destroy the militant group. More than 300 have been killed in since the start of the latest onslaught. Israel says it aims to seize Gaza and hold on to territory there, displace hundreds of thousands of people and secure aid distribution.

As the new offensive ramps up, Israel agreed to allow a limited amount of aid into the war-ravaged territory after a 2 1/2 month blockade that prevented the entry of food, medicine and fuel, among other goods. The blockade prompted warnings from food experts of a risk of famine.

Criticism of Israel's conduct intensified Monday when allies Canada, France and the United Kingdom threatened "concrete actions" against the country, including sanctions, and called on Israel to stop its "egregious" new military actions in Gaza.

Netanyahu rejected the criticism, saying it was "a huge prize" for Hamas' 7 October, 2023, attack that would invite more such violence. *—PTI*

2nd man charged over fires at Starmer properties

LONDON, 20 MAY

A second man, Stanislav Carpiuc, 26, from Romford, east London, has been charged over a series of fires targeting properties linked to UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer. Carpiuc, a Romanian national, faces charges of arson with intent to endanger life and was arrested at Luton Airport on 17 May. This follows the arrest of 21-year-old Ukrainian Roman Lavrynovych last week, who faces similar charges for setting fire to Starmer's family home and other properties. Lavrynovych denied the charges in a police interview. A 34-year-old man was also arrested in Chelsea, London, on suspicion of conspiracy to commit arson. The fires, which occurred between 8 and 12 May, did not result in injuries. Starmer and his family have since moved into the official Downing Street residence. *—PTI*

Trump with Melania signs bill making 'revenge porn' a crime

President Donald Trump with first lady Melania during the bill-signing event in the Rose Garden of the White House on Monday *PHOTO: PTI*

WASHINGTON, 19 MAY

President Donald Trump, alongside his wife, Melania, on Monday, signed the Take It Down Act, a measure the first lady helped usher through Congress to set stricter penalties for the distribution of non-consensual intimate imagery online, or "revenge porn."

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said on Monday that the first lady was "instrumental in getting this important legislation passed." In March, Melania Trump travelled to Capitol Hill to lobby House members to pass the bill following its approval by the Senate.

The bill makes it a federal crime to "knowingly publish" or threaten to publish intimate images without a person's consent, including AI-created "deepfakes." Websites and social media companies will be required to remove such material within 48 hours after a victim requests it. The platforms must also take steps to delete duplicate content.

Many states have already banned the dissemination of sexually explicit deepfakes or revenge porn, but the Take It Down Act is a rare example of federal regulators imposing on internet companies.

The bill, sponsored by Sens. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, and Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., received overwhelming bipartisan support in Congress, passing the House in April by a 409-2 vote and clearing the Senate by unanimous consent. *—PTI*

US SC allows Trump to deport 3.5L Venezuelans

SAN PEDRO SULA, 20 MAY

The US Supreme Court has allowed President Donald Trump to end Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for 350,000 Venezuelans, reversing Joe Biden's 2023 extension. The court's unsigned order lifted a block on Homeland Security's decision, despite Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson's dissent. TPS had offered deportation protection and work permits. *—PTI*

Trump: Surprised people unaware of Biden's cancer

WASHINGTON, 20 MAY

US President Donald Trump said on Monday that was "surprised" the public was not told about former president Joe Biden's cancer diagnosis, fuelling speculation was the health condition was covered up. "I'm surprised that the public wasn't notified a long time ago," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office.*—Agencies*

Thousands of angry residents placed the children's bodies on a main road, demanding justice and answers from the authorities *PHOTO: PTI*

Thousands protest after drone strike kills four Pak children

PESHAWAR, 20 MAY

A suspected drone strike in Pakistan's restive northwest killed four children and wounded five others, sparking mass protests in Mir Ali, a stronghold of the Pakistani Taliban, officials said Tuesday.

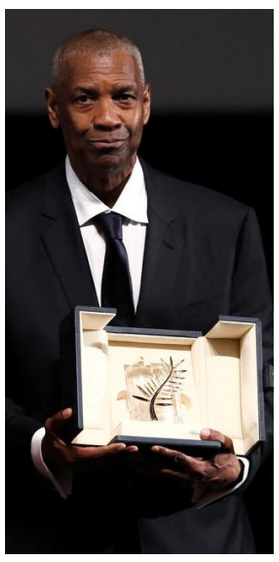
The strike occurred Monday, but it remains unclear who was responsible. The Pakistani army has not commented on the incident.

Thousands of angry residents placed the children's bodies on a main road, demanding justice and answers from the authorities. "We are not blaming anyone, but we want justice," said local tribal elder Mufti Baitullah. "We will not bury the bodies until we are told who is responsible for killing our innocent children."

He warned that the protest, currently confined to a regional roadblock, could expand if no action is taken. Demonstrators chanted slogans such as "we want justice."

The attack comes amid intensified military operations against Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), a militant group distinct from the Afghan Taliban but similarly active in the region. TTP fighters frequently target security forces in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

Provincial minister Nayak Muhammad Dawar condemned the strike and confirmed an investigation is underway. Mir Ali and neighbouring areas near the Afghan border have long harboured militants, with recent months seeing a surge in TTP activity. *—PTI*



Actor-director Denzel Washington was honoured with an honorary Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival on 19 May, recognising his exceptional career. The prestigious award is typically given to the director of the festival's winning film. The prestigious award, typically given to the director of the festival's winning film, was presented to the 70-year-old actor by director Spike Lee *PHOTO: X*

Trump bats for his 'big, beautiful' bill

WASHINGTON, 20 MAY

President Donald Trump visited Capitol Hill early on Tuesday to seal the deal on his "big, beautiful bill", using the power of political persuasion to unify divided House Republicans on the multitrillion-dollar package that is at a risk of collapsing ahead of planned votes this week. Trump has implored GOP holdouts to "stop talking, and get it done". *—PTI*

Trump's relative is envoy to France

WASHINGTON, 20 MAY

The Senate has confirmed real Charles Kushner, the father of President Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner, to serve as ambassador to France. Kushner, who was confirmed 51-45, is the founder of Kushner Companies, a real estate firm. His son Jared is a former White House senior adviser to Trump who is married to his daughter Ivanka. *—PTI*

Tai Prez calls for peace with China

TAIPEI, 20 MAY

Taiwan's president has reiterated calls for peace and dialogue with China as he marked one year in office, amid heightened Chinese military activity and worsening political division at home. Lai Ching-te said on Tuesday that a war would have "no winners", but Taiwan would continue to strengthen its defences to ward off a Chinese invasion. *—PTI*

Jet aborts take-off to avoid collision at LaGuardia

NEW YORK, 20 MAY

A Republic Airways jet aborted takeoff at high speed on May 6 at New York's LaGuardia Airport to avoid a United Airlines plane taxiing across the runway. Federal officials are investigating the close call, which occurred despite LaGuardia being equipped with the FAA's advanced ASDE-X surface radar system.

The FAA and NTSB confirmed the investigation. Tower audio revealed an air traffic controller mistakenly believed the United plane had cleared the runway. A separate ground controller had redirected the United jet after it missed its taxiway exit.

The incident highlights ongoing concerns about runway safety and coordination between controllers. Though serious runway incursions have declined—from 22 in 2023 to seven in 2024—the FAA maintains the rate of incursions has hovered around 30 per million operations for a decade. *—PTI*

US funds cut: WHO vies for $2.1B budget

After US cuts funding, WHO chief defends $2.1B budget request by comparing it with cost of war *PHOTO: X@BFLD_ENTERPRISE*

GENEVA, 20 MAY

World Health Organisation (WHO) Chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus on Monday urged member states to back the agency's "extremely modest" USD 2.1 billion annual budget, amid a major funding crisis triggered by U.S. cuts.

Speaking at the WHO's annual assembly, Tedros compared the request to global spending on war and tobacco. "USD 2.1 billion is spent on global military activity every eight hours," he said, calling current priorities "upside down."

US President Donald Trump halted WHO funding in January, reviving criticism from his first term. The US — previously the agency's largest donor — is also not participating in the current World Health Assembly.

The WHO has scaled back its two-year budget by 22 per cent and secured just 60 per cent of its revised goal, leaving a USD 1.7 billion shortfall. Cuts have hit its ability to respond to health threats like Ebola and Covid-19.

European countries have also slashed funding, redirecting aid toward defence amid tensions with Russia.

Meanwhile, WHO member countries on Tuesday adopted a historic pandemic agreement to improve global preparedness and response, following the Covid-19 crisis. The treaty, three years in the making, ensures countries sharing virus samples will receive access to tests, medicines and vaccines, with 20 per cent allocated to WHO for equitable distribution to poorer nations. *—PTI*

1,15,000 HOMES LOSE POWER

More tornadoes pummel US amid recovery bid

KENTUCKY, 20 MAY

More tornadoes battered the central US on Monday, damaging buildings and cutting power as communities from Texas to Kentucky continued recovering from a wave of deadly storms that killed over two dozen people.

At least four tornadoes struck Oklahoma and Nebraska on Monday evening, destroying 10 homes and wiping out a fire station, according to the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management.

Around 1,15,000 homes across Oklahoma, Arkansas and Missouri lost power.

More than 500 severe weather reports were filed from states, including Texas and New Jersey *HOTO: X@WEATHERMONITORS*

In Texas, softball-sized hail fell near Fort Worth, while parts of highways in multiple states were closed due to flooding or storm damage. A concert in Arkansas was cancelled, and schools in Tulsa suspended after-school activities.

Kentucky was the hardest hit, with 19 deaths reported, most in Laurel County. In London, the town's airport became a relief hub after being struck by a tornado. One firefighter, Major Leslie Leatherman, died protecting a woman—his wife—from the storm.

St Louis, Missouri, continued cleanup from a Friday tornado that damaged over 5,000 buildings and caused five deaths. Mayor Cara Spencer estimated damage at USD 1.6 billion and criticised delays in federal aid. *—PTI*

Gold price falls by ₹490 to settle at ₹96,540/10g

NEW DELHI, 20 MAY

Gold prices fell by Rs 490 to Rs 96,540 per 10g in the national capital on Tuesday due to weak demand, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The yellow metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 97,030 per 10g on Monday. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity depreciated by Rs 450 to Rs 96,130 per 10g (inclusive of all taxes). It had settled at Rs 96,580 per 10g in the previous market close. Silver prices plunged by Rs 1,000 to Rs 97,500 per kg (inclusive of all taxes) on Tuesday from the previous close of Rs 98,500 per kg. Spot gold in the overseas market went up marginally to USD 3,233.68 per ounce. —*PTI*

Rupee falls by 21P, closes at 85.63 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 20 MAY

The rupee depreciated 21 paise to close at 85.63 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday, on weak domestic markets and a bounce back in US treasury yields. Forex traders said the recent surge in the US 10-year yield reflects mounting concerns over fiscal and monetary policies, driving borrowing costs higher. Foreign fund outflows and positive crude oil prices also weighed on the rupee. However, the weak US dollar index cushioned the downside, they said. At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened at 85.47 and moved between an intra-day high of 85.39 and a low of 85.65 against the greenback. The unit ended the session lower at 85.63 (provisional), registering a fall of 21 paise over its previous closing level—*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Zydus' fourth quarter net profit down at ₹1.17K cr

NEW DELHI, 20 MAY

Zydus Lifesciences Ltd on Tuesday reported a marginal decline in consolidated net profit at Rs 1,170.9 crore in the fourth quarter ended 31 March. The company had posted a net profit of Rs 1,182.3 crore in the corresponding period of the previous fiscal year, Zydus Lifesciences said in a regulatory filing. Total revenue from operations in the quarter under review stood at Rs 6,527.9 crore in the fourth quarter as against Rs 5,533.8 crore in the year-ago period, it added. Total expenses in the fourth quarter were higher at Rs 4,716.9 crore as compared to Rs 4,143.2 crore in the corresponding period a year ago. In FY25, consolidated total revenue from operations stood at Rs 23,241.5 crore as compared to Rs 19,547.4 crore —*PTI*

Lupin, Honeywell to jointly make next-gen inhalers

NEW DELHI, 20 MAY

Pharma major Lupin Ltd on Tuesday said it has partnered with Honeywell to use the latter's propellant "Solstice Air" to transform respiratory care through the development of next-generation inhalers. Designed for patients with asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), Honeywell's "Solstice Air" has the potential to prevent the release of high global warming potential (GWP) molecules, marking a major step forward in helping to reduce carbon emissions, the company said in a statement. Lupin said it intends to become the first pharmaceutical company in India to use Honeywell's Solstice Air product at scale as a next-generation propellant in pressurised metered-dose inhalers (pMDIs). Solstice Air offers an alternative to traditional hydrofluorocarbon (HFC)-based propellants, helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 99.9 per cent, it added. —*PTI*

Markets slide for 3rd day in a row; Sensex, Nifty fall 1%

Sensex tanks by 872.98 pts, Nifty drops by 261.55 pts

MUMBAI, 20 MAY

Analysts said investors opted for profit-booking as they awaited clarity on the India–US trade deal PHOTO: PTI

Falling for the third day in a row, benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty tumbled 1 per cent on Tuesday dragged down by profit taking in bluechips such as HDFC Bank, Reliance Industries and ICICI Bank.

Retreating from early highs, the 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 872.98 points or 1.06 per cent to settle at 81,186.44 as 27 of its constituents closed lower and three with gains. During the day, it dropped 905.72 points or 1.10 per cent to 81,153.70 as profit taking emerged in auto, financials and defence stocks.

The broader NSE Nifty tumbled 261.55 points or 1.05 per cent to 24,683.90.

Analysts said investors opted for profit-booking as they awaited more clarity on the India-US trade agreement.

From Sensex firms, Eternal dropped the most by 4.10 per cent. Maruti, Mahindra & Mahindra, UltraTech Cement, Power Grid, Nestle, Bajaj Finance, Hindustan Unilever and Asian Paints were also among the laggards. HDFC Bank dropped by 1.26 per cent and index major Reliance Industries by 1.13 per cent.

Tata Steel, Infosys and ITC were the gainers.

The BSE midcap gauge tanked 1.65 per cent and smallcap index dropped 0.96 per cent.

All sectoral indices ended lower. Auto declined 2.13 per cent, consumer discretionary (1.81 per cent), utilities (1.64 per cent), services (1.53 per cent), industrials (1.36 per cent) and telecommunication (1.35 per cent).

As many as 2,531 stocks declined while 1,438 advanced and 135 remained unchanged on the BSE.

Among Asian markets, Japan's Nikkei 225 index, Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng settled in the positive territory while South Korea's Kospi ended marginally lower.

Markets in Europe were trading in the green. US markets ended higher on Monday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude dipped 0.11 per cent to USD 65.47 a barrel. —*PTI*

STOCKS FALL 1.9%

Defence stocks nosedive as Paras backers sell stakes

MUMBAI, 20 JAN

PHOTO: PTI

Defence-related stocks steeply on Tuesday, as investors resorted to profit booking after a recent record run. The slide brought down Nifty Defence India index over 1.9 per cent to 8,047.65, reports said.

They said Paras Defence shares also fell around 5 per cent after its promoters offloaded around 3.3 per cent stake in the company. The stock had rallied nearly 55 per cent in the past one month.

National Stock Exchange (NSE) data revealed that the company's promoter Sharad Virji Shah sold 9,00,000 shares at Rs 1,682.87 apiece. Anish Mehta sold 2.17 lakh shares at Rs 1,664.62 apiece, while Kaajal Harsh Bhansali sold 2.17 lakh shares at Rs 1,662.62 apiece.

In March 2025, Paras Defence promoters held 57.05 per cent stake in the company, while general public held the remaining stake.

Cochin Shipyard shares crashed six per cent to Rs 1,863.20 apiece. BEML, DCX India and Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers shares also plunged over three per cent.

The shares of Bharat Dynamics, Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders and Hindustan Aeronautics shares also declined around two percent each, while Cyient DLM and Data Patterns were down nearly one percent each.

Zen Technologies and Bharat Electronics shares, however, bucked the trend to trade in the green with marginal gains.

"An important trend in the market is the sharp rally in defence stocks. Even though this segment has bright prospects, their valuations have become excessive and therefore, investors have to be extremely cautious," said VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments. —*Agencies*

FREE FOR 6 MONTHS

Airtel, Google team up to offer cloud storage subscription

NEW DELHI, 20 MAY

Bharti Airtel and Google on Tuesday announced a partnership to offer Google One cloud storage subscription service for the telco's customers, to address the limitations of device storage.

All postpaid and Wi-Fi customers will get access to six months of 100 GB of Google One cloud storage at no extra cost.

After six months, a fee of Rs 125 per month will be added to the customer's monthly bill. If a customer chooses not to continue the subscription, they can cease to be a Google One member, according to a release.

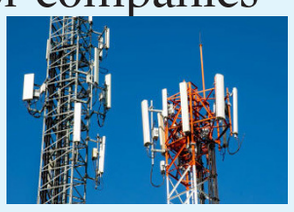
The partnership seeks to address the issue of growing data storage constraints faced by users by ensuring that customers have adequate space to store photos, videos, documents and other digital content without the need to frequently delete files or resort to expensive physical storage expansions, according to the release.

As an introductory offer, the 100 GB cloud storage will be available at no additional cost for six months from the date of activation, enabling customers to back up their data and taste the convenience of cloud storage. Customers will also be able to share this storage with up to five additional people.

Additionally, WhatsApp chats on Android are backed up to Google Account storage, which will make device switching easier for customers. The cloud storage provision is compatible with both Android and iOS platforms, it said. —*PTI*

'SC ruling on telco trio is a silver lining for companies'

MUMBAI, 20 MAY



Monday's setback for Vodafone Idea, Bharti Airtel and Tata Teleservices at the Supreme Court has a silver lining as the top court has opened the doors for government relief on the adjusted gross revenue (AGR) dues.

The companies had urged the top court to waive off the AGR dues comprising interest, penalty and interest on penalty. A bench led by justices JB Pardiwala and R Mahadevan dismissed the petition, saying that it was "misconceived".

"We are really shocked by these petitions which have come before us. It is not expected of a multinational company. We will dismiss it," the bench told's advocate Mukul Rohatgi.

The Supreme Court, however, said it is okay with the government extending any relief to these companies. "If the government wants to help you, we are not coming in the way," said Justice Pardiwala.

Bharti Airtel and Bharti Hexacom sought waiver of Rs 34,745 crore, while Vodafone Idea wanted a waiver of Rs 45,457 crore in AGR -related dues.

Rohatgi had previously said the survival of the petitioner firm was crucial for maintaining competition in the telecom sector. Now the Centre holds a 49 per cent stake in Vodafone Idea, following a recent equity conversion of interest dues, he had added. —*Agencies*

FM CALLS FOR RIGHT BALANCE OF NORMS AND FREEDOM

NEW DELHI, 20 MAY

Highlighting the importance of competitive markets, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday said the ability of CCI to strike a balance between regulatory vigilance and pro-growth mindset will be integral to building a resilient, equitable, and innovation-driven economic framework.

At the 16th Annual Day function of the Competition Commission of India (CCI), Sitharaman also said that there needs to have the right balance of regulations and freedom.

CCI works to promote fair competition and prevent competitive practices in the marketplace. Besides, mergers and acquisitions beyond a certain threshold need approval of the watchdog.

Touching upon the emergence of new technologies, Sitharaman, who is also in charge of the Corporate Affairs Ministry, said artificial intelligence technologies raise novel questions about market power, transparency, data access, algorithmic biases, and the scope of competitive harm.

"Free and fair digital markets are challenged by the emergence of gatekeeper platforms, asymmetries in data access, and cross-border implications of digital business models.

"The rise of cross-border digital monopolies demands global cooperation and agile regulation," she noted.

The regulatory framework should also help swift approvals for combinations that do not harm competition, the minister said.

At the event, the minister also released the Diagnostic Toolkit for Public Procurement Officers as well as FAQs on combinations —*PTI*

Govt to invest ₹1.2K cr in FCI, CWC godowns

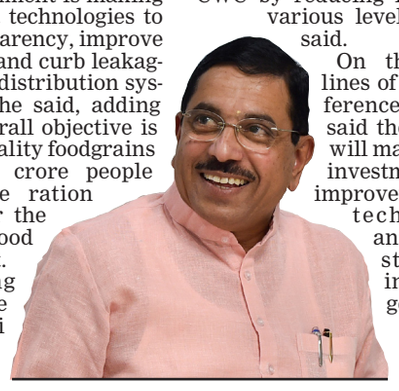
NEW DELHI, 20 MAY

Union Food Minister Pralhad Joshi on Tuesday said the government will invest around Rs 1,280 crore to upgrade infrastructure of existing godowns of state-owned FCI and Central Warehousing Corporation.

The government is making use of latest technologies to bring transparency, improve efficiencies and curb leakages in public distribution system (PDS), he said, adding that the overall objective is to supply quality foodgrains to over 80 crore people through the ration shops under the National Food Security Act.

Addressing a conference here, Joshi said there are currently 2,278 godowns, which includes owned and hired.

He said the Food Corporation of India (FCI) will invest Rs 1,000 crore while the CWC Rs 280 crore on the infrastructure upgrade of their own godowns. This will help in huge saving for both FCI and CWC by reducing losses at various levels, Joshi said.



On the sidelines of the conference, Joshi said the Centre will make these investments for improvement in technology and infrastructure in these godowns. —*PTI*

US tariffs' uncertainty hits debt issuers, says Moody's

NEW DELHI, 20 MAY

Moody's Ratings on Tuesday said the uncertainties around US tariffs have negative credit consequences for debt issuers across emerging markets, including companies, governments and banks.

"The on-again, off-again US tariffs and difficulty predicting US trade policy have negative credit consequences for debt issuers across emerging markets," Moody's said.

Besides, geopolitics is an additional stress for emerging markets, including the flare-up of tensions between India and Pakistan.

Exporters are most directly exposed to US tariff changes, but most debt issuers face indirect effects, Moody's said, adding tariffs will reach a much bigger and varied group of debt issuers indirectly through slowing economic growth and, for many, commodity price declines, currency depreciation and investor risk aversion.

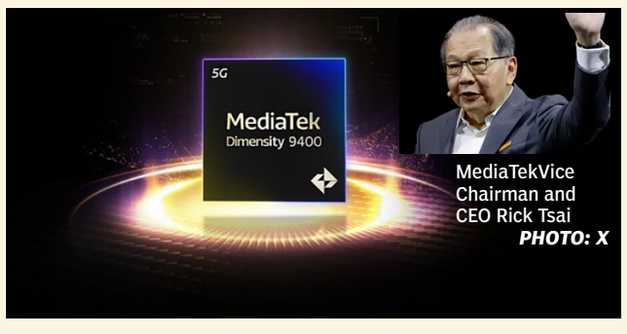
"The raft of tariffs the US administration has announced, altered and paused this year has negative credit consequences for debt issuers across emerging markets, including companies, governments and banks," Moody's said.

Companies that rely on exports to the US are the most exposed. But the wider effects of tariffs and trade uncertainty on consumer, business and financial activity will affect most emerging market entities, it added —*PTI*

KEY BREAKTHROUGH

MediaTek to roll out world's smallest chip

TAIPEI, 20 MAY



Fabless semiconductor company MediaTek will begin production of world's smallest 2-nanometer chips from September this year, a senior official of the company said on Tuesday.

At present the smallest chip in production is of 3 nanometer size.

"We are now moving into 2 nanometers. We will be taking out our first 2 nanometers device in September this year. Of course, this is a high-volume chip," MediaTek Vice Chairman and CEO Rick Tsai said at global tech event Computex.

Tarun Pathak, Research Director, Counterpoint Research said MediaTek's announcement that its first 2nm chip will be "taped out" in September is a significant achievement, highlighting its strengthening partnership with industry leaders like TSMC.

"This 2nm chip is likely a custom application specific chip (ASIC) or a smartphone, designed for substantial efficiency gains through structural innovations," he said.

Tsai said that in addition to advanced computing devices, MediaTek is moving towards connectivity technologies as well.

"As the world moves gradually into the 6G era, I promise you, 6G technology will come with AI assistance and MediaTek will be in a perfect position to develop, bring up the 6G capability to the world with our AI capability," Tsai said.

He said MediaTek is moving to the really high-end, leading-edge Google's Chromebook.

"Kompanio Ultra, is made in TSMC 3 nanometer process. It delivers 50 tops of AI computing capability and up to 20 hours of all-day battery life," Tsai said. —*PTI*

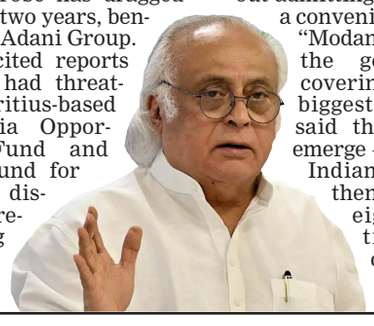
Cong on Adani: Govt can't hide 'India's biggest scam'

NEW DELHI, 20 MAY

The Congress on Tuesday raised concerns over reports that SEBI has warned two offshore funds holding Adani Group shares with penalties and potential licence cancellations. Congress leader Jairam Ramesh said that while SEBI's actions may appear like progress, the probe has dragged on for over two years, benefitting the Adani Group.

Ramesh cited reports that SEBI had threatened Mauritius-based Elara India Opportunities Fund and Vespera Fund for failing to disclose shareholding details. They are accused of "stock parking" – acting as fronts for benami Adani investments.

He said as of December 2022, 98.78 per cent of Elara's investments were in three Adani companies, while Vespera had 93.9 per cent of its holdings in Adani Enterprises in June 2022. He claimed the funds are seeking to settle the case without admitting guilt, calling it a convenient outcome for "Modani". He accused the government of covering up "India's biggest scam" and said the truth would emerge – if not through Indian institutions, then through foreign jurisdictions Adani cannot influence. —*PTI*



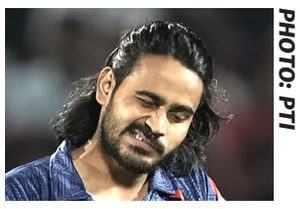


PHOTO: PTI

LSG Digvesh gets one match suspension over spat

LUCKNOW, 20 MAY

Lucknow Super Giants leg-spinner Digvesh Singh Rathi has been handed a one-match suspension after another instance of his "tick the notebook" celebration following his dismissal of Sunrisers Hyderabad opener Abhishek Sharma during an IPL match here. Abhishek was also reprimanded for the same incident and received a 25 percent fine along with one demerit point for what was his first offence. For Digvesh, this was his third Code of Conduct breach, and he has been suspended from LSG's next encounter against Gujarat Titans in Ahmedabad, having accumulated five demerit points after three separate offenses of the same nature.—*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Srikanth advances to main draw of Malaysia Masters

KUALA LUMPUR, 20 MAY

Kidambi Srikanth secured a spot in the main draw of the Malaysia Masters, but the rest of the Indian shuttlers were unable to progress past the singles qualifiers, exiting the Super 500 tournament here on Tuesday. Srikanth, who is on a comeback trail, recovered from a first-game loss to defeat Chinese Taipei's Huang Yu Kai 9-21, 21-12, 21-6 in his second qualifying men's singles match. The 32-year-old, a 2021 World Championships silver medallist, had earlier beaten another Taipei player, Kuo Kuan Lin, 21-8, 21-13 in the first round.—*PTI*

Chess grandmaster Magnus Carlsen is forced into a draw

BERLIN, 20 MAY

Norwegian chess grandmaster Carlsen was forced into a draw Monday by more than 143,000 people worldwide playing against him in a single, record-setting game. Billed as "Magnus Carlsen vs. The World," the online match began on 4 April on Chess.com, the world's largest chess website, and was the first-ever online freestyle game to feature a world champion. The mega-match ended after Team World checked Carlsen's king a third time.—*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Prostitution sting: Kyle pleads guilty to lesser charge

COLUMBUS, 20 MAY

Former Olympic wrestling gold medalist Kyle Snyder pleaded guilty Monday to a lesser charge of disorderly conduct after being arrested in a prostitution sting. Snyder, one of the most successful wrestlers in U.S. history, initially was charged with engaging in prostitution after he was arrested on 9 May at a motel in Columbus, Ohio. A judge ordered Snyder, 29, to pay a $250 fine. Snyder said he has already completed a one-day program for people accused of solicitation. Snyder, who appeared at the hearing by video, said he has learned a lot about himself and that he "plans on making much better decisions."—*PTI*

MI look to seal IPL playoffs spot against fallible DC

MI deserve to be deciding their IPL playoffs fate: Mahela

MUMBAI, 20 MAY

Fighting for the only available play-off spot, Mumbai Indians will take on Delhi Capitals in a potentially decisive showdown here on Wednesday, with the five-time champion home team better-placed to advance against the erratic visitors.

Mumbai Indians were "always in contention" of making the IPL playoffs after their six-match winning run earlier in the season, and the team deserves to be in a position to decide its fate, said head coach Mahela Jayawardene on Tuesday.

Sunrisers Hyderabad's six-wicket thrashing of Lucknow Super Giants on Monday ended the latter's chances of making the final four. Mumbai Indians and Delhi Capitals will now fight it out. Gujarat Titans, Punjab Kings, and Royal Challengers have taken the first three knockout phase spots.

Both Mumbai Indians (14 points) and Delhi Capitals (13 points) are in control of their destiny for now, but the host side starts favourite at the Wankhede Stadium.

Delhi Capitals' captain Axar Patel plays a shot during the IPL 2025 match against Mumbai Indians PHOTO: ANI

While MI's win will take them to 16 points and beyond the reach of the Axar Patel-led side, Delhi Capitals need to win both their remaining contests, the last being against Punjab Kings, to sail through.

Mumbai Indians' form and all-round depth tilt the scale in their favour, even though they are coming off a narrow loss to Gujarat Titans nearly a fortnight ago. This was after recording six consecutive wins before emerging as one of the most formidable teams in the competition.

While a win will carry MI into the playoffs, a defeat will leave their fate on the outcome of the contest between DC and PBKS on 24 May.—*PTI*

MI VS DC

HEAD TO HEAD	
PLAYED:	36
MI Won:	20
DC Won:	16

MI vs DC Match starts at 7.30 pm IST

> Rishabh Pant couldn't live up to his reputation of being a bona fide match-winner despite his staggering Rs 27 crore billing
>
> -Mitchell Marsh, teammate

AHMEDABAD HOSTS IPL FINAL

NEW DELHI, 20 MAY

Ahmedabad will host the Indian Premier League's final on June 3 along with Qualifier 2 while Mullanpur will stage the first two play-off games this month, the BCCI announced on Tuesday.

Considering the monsoon, the BCCI has also shifted the 23 May fixture between Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Sunrisers Hyderabad in Bengaluru to Lucknow. The last match at the Chinnaswamy Stadium was washed out.

Hyderabad and Kolkata were supposed to host the play-offs as per the original dates but the IPL schedule had to be revised in the wake of the India-Pakistan military conflict that halted the event for a week.

The BCCI has also considered the monsoon season before deciding on the venues.

"The new venues for the Playoffs were decided by the IPL Governing Council keeping in mind the weather conditions and other parameters," said the BCCI in a statement.

Qualifier 1 and the Eliminator will take place in Mullanpur on 29 and 30 May, while Ahmedabad will stage Qualifier 2 and the final on 1 and 3 June. Ahmedabad had earlier hosted the IPL final in 2022 and 2023. —*PTI*

MI sign Bairstow, Richard Gleeson, and Asalanka

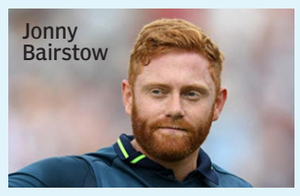
NEW DELHI, 20 MAY

Five-time IPL champions Mumbai Indians have signed Jonny Bairstow, Richard Gleeson, and Charith Asalanka as replacements for a group of foreign recruits who are set to leave for national duty following the team's final league match on 26 May.

England's Will Jacks and the South African duo of Ryan Rickelton and Corbin Bosch will depart after MI's last league game against Punjab Kings on 26 May.

"Jacks will be replaced by English wicketkeeper-batter Jonny Bairstow, who joins the squad for INR 5.25 crore," the IPL stated in an official release.

"English pacer Richard Gleeson will come in for Ryan Rickelton at a reserve price of Rs one crore, while Sri Lankan batter Charith Asalanka replaces Corbin Bosch at Rs 75 lakh."



RCB vs SRH moved from B'luru to Lucknow

The Royal Challengers Bengaluru vs Sunrisers Hyderabad IPL 2025 match has been shifted to Lucknow from Bengaluru due to adverse weather conditions.

According to the revised schedule, RCB was supposed to play its last home game on Friday, 23 May, at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium, before traveling to Lucknow for its last league match on 27 May.

RCB has already confirmed its top-four spot with two games left. The Playoffs will begin on 29 May, and the final will take place on 3 June.

Bengaluru's previous fixture, at home, against Kolkata Knight Riders was also washed out due to rain.

As per weather experts, southern states of India, especially Bengaluru, are expected to get rains throughout the month.

—*PTI*

Hockey India League 2026 to begin on 5 January

DUBAI, 20 MAY

The 2026 edition of the Hockey India League (HIL) will begin from January 5, Hockey India's general secretary Bhola Nath Singh said here on Tuesday.

The HIL, which was revived after a gap of seven years, was last held from December 28 to February 1 this year."The HIL window is fixed and the men's HIL will continue to be an eight-team competition, but the women's HIL will be of six teams from four from next year."The venues have not yet been decided, but we are in consultation with all stakeholders, and soon we will have an update," Bhola Nath said during a program at a private university." Looking into the sentiments of foreign players and their Christmas celebrations, we have decided the next HIL will be from 5 January," he added.—*PTI*

ENGLISH SUMMER: BUMRAH EMERGES AS MAJORITY PICK OF LAST SELECTORS TO LEAD INDIA

NEW DELHI, 20 JUNE

There might be an air of doubt about Mohammed Shami's ability to last a five-Test series but erstwhile national selection committee members MSK Prasad, Devang Gandhi and Jatin Paranjpe are unequivocal that the 'Amroha Express' is a must-pick for the tour of England.

Shami has played nine IPL games this season for Sunrisers Hyderabad with only six wickets in his kitty and has gone for over 11 runs per over.

However it has been learnt that Shami has already started bowling with the red Dukes at the SRH nets with an eye on England tour, now that SRH's play-off qualification hopes have been dashed.

The Indian squad, which is expected to comprise 16 members, will be one of the trickiest ones in recent times, as there is a debate around who the new captain should be.

While the erstwhile committee members differed on their choice of vice-captaincy, they were unanimous that one can't look beyond Jasprit Bumrah even though there remains a question mark on his fitness status.

Bangladesh to play 3 T20's in Pak this month

Pakistan has agreed to host Bangladesh for three Twenty20s instead of five.

The schedule was revised by the Pakistan Cricket Board on Tuesday after chairman Mohsin Naqvi met with Bangladesh counterparts in Dubai.

Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore will host all three games this month, with the dates to be determined.

Last month, both countries agreed to play five T20s from 25 to June 3 May, with Faisalabad hosting the first two.

However, the series was in doubt after the military showdown between India and Pakistan forced the PCB to reschedule its premier domestic T20 tournament — the Pakistan Super League and delay the final in Lahore to 25 May.

Bangladesh is touring the United Arab Emirates, where it will play the third and final T20 series decider on Wednesday. —*PTI*

BNC silver medallists to compete in Thailand Open

NEW DELHI, 20 MAY

Indian women pugilists are set to compete in their first international event since the Paris Olympics, with reigning national champions slated to participate in next month's World Boxing Cup, while the silver medallists will be in action at the Thailand Open starting on 24 May.

The same selection policy applies to the male boxers. Indian boxers had been forced to miss several key events, including the Asian Championships last year and the Strandja Memorial Tournament, in the ongoing Olympic cycle by the Boxing Federation of India (BFI) as the governing body kept on delaying national camps, and repeatedly postponed the women's national championship.

While the male pugilists returned to international competition at the World Boxing Cup in April, the delay in conducting the women's nationals, which were finally held at the end of March, meant female boxers missed out on the exposure.

"The silver medallist of the 8th Elite Men and Women National Boxing Championship will be selected for the Thailand Open International Boxing Tournament 2025," a BFI statement read. —*PTI*

Men's national soccer team player Sunil Chhetri during the second day of the team's practice session as part of preparations for the upcoming international fixtures, including the FIFA World Cup 2026, at the National Center of Excellence in Kolkata on Tuesday. PHOTO: PTI

EUROPEAN DREAM ALIVE

Supersubs give Brighton a thrilling win over Liverpool

BRIGHTON, 20 MAY

Substitute Jack Hinshelwood scored with his first touch of the ball and gave Brighton a thrilling 3-2 win over Liverpool on Monday and kept alive its slim chance of European football.

If fourth-placed Chelsea wins the Europa Conference League next week, there is a chance that the eighth-placed team in the Premier League can qualify for next season's Conference League.

Monday's win lifted Brighton into that coveted eighth spot, three points above Brentford, four ahead of Fulham, and five clear of Bournemouth. Bournemouth has two games left; the others have one.

Jack Hinshelwood celebrates after the match PHOTO:X / @JACK_HINSH

Liverpool rested several starters but still took the lead after just nine minutes, and in doing so became only the third team in Premier League history to score in every one of its away games. Conor Bradley, in his first start since signing a new four-year contract on Saturday, cut the ball back from the byline for Harvey Elliot to side-foot home.

Brighton, though, fought back in an end-to-end encounter.

Danny Welbeck missed a golden chance after half an hour, but Yasin Ayari made no mistake two minutes later to level the score.

Liverpool was back in front by the break after Dominik Szoboszlai's memorable cross-cum-shot on the stroke of half-time.

Japanese substitute Kaoru Mitoma equalized in the 69th, just four minutes after his introduction. It was his third goal in four games, all of them as a late substitute.

Hinshelwood then stole in at the back post to convert Matt O'Riley's low cross and, although the offside flag was raised, the goal was given after a video review. —*PTI*

Adriyan opens India's account with silver on debut

SUHL, 20 MAY

Adriyan Karmakar opened India's medal account at the ISSF Junior World Cup here on Tuesday with a silver on debut in the 50m rifle prone event, ensuring a positive start for the country in the prestigious tournament.

The 20-year-old junior 3P national champion aggregated 626.7 after 60 shots and missed out on gold by just 0.3 points to Sweden's Jesper Johansson.

USA's Griffin Lake won the bronze with 624.6.

Adriyan, who has earlier represented India juniors at the world championships but never in a World Cup, shot confidently and was one of the earliest participants to finish. His effort was also a junior national record in the event.

Among other Indians in the fray, 15-year-old Rohit Kanyan finished 12th with a score of 620.2, while Vedant Nitin Waghmare shot 614.4 to end in 35th place. —*PTI*